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BY

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Author of "The Two Midshipmen," "The Naval Lieutenant," "The Young Commander," "The Lily of Devon," &c.

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OUR BLUE JACKETS,

AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

CHAPTER I.

The day following our hero's interview with Admiral O'Brien passed slowly. He bore confinement indifferently. He stood at the window, admiring the graceful figures of the Spanish maidens, as they passed up and down the street; and, at times, he thought of Juana, and felt vexed that he should see the black-eyed maiden no more, not even to bid her farewell.

From his friend, O'Brien, he heard how the

master of the Terpsichore, Mr. Elder, and the midshipman, and the rest of the prize crew aboard the Vestale fared. None were, he was delighted to hear, killed; though all suffered, more or less, from knife stabs and cutlasses,—they were overpowered at last, and secured, but would eventually be exchanged.

From the window of his chamber Magnus had a magnificent view over the broad Atlantic, but not over the bay or harbour. When night set in he became anxious for the arrival of O'Brien. An hour after dark his chamber door was unlocked, and an officer entered.

"Senor," said this person, most respectfully, "There is a carriage with four mules waiting at the gate to conduct you to San Lucar."

"San Lucar?" said our hero, with a slight start; he knew San Lucar was the residence of the Duke de Cabra.

"Do I go as a prisoner?" questioned the lieutenant.

"Certainly not, senor, you are from this hour free."

"Very good, then I follow you. Please to say to Admiral O'Brien where I am gone when he he calls."

"Certainly, senor," returned the official, with wonderful respect.

Magnus O'More had changed his marine garments for those bespoke for him by the kind hostess, and the tailor had measured him for the attire of a Spanish hidalgo. These had been sent in the morning with a note from Juana, bitterly regretting that they were not permitted to visit him; but hoping he would be released the next day.

Magnus O'More was by no means sorry to get rid of garments, the taking of which had involved him in so much trouble. Following the officer to the gate he perceived a calese to which were harnessed four fine mules; two postillions stood ready to mount, and an attendant waited holding the door.

The attendant bowed low, casting a look of great curiosity at the tall fine figure of the

lieutenant, as he returned the salutation of the officer, and then closed the door after he had seated himself. The postillions mounted, smacked their whips, and off started the mules through the streets of Cadiz. Pulling back the curtains in front our hero said to the attendant seated in front,

"Could you stop for one moment at the posada of Senora Torredos?"

"Certainly, senor; we shall pass it."

In less than ten minutes the calese drew up in front of the posada, and the attendant descending entered the house. In a moment mother and daughter, followed by Juan the muleteer, were at the carriage door. The amazement of the three was indeed great, when they beheld the lieutenant in a carriage, which they knew by the arms on the panel to belong to the Duke de Cabra.

"The saints be praised!" ejaculated the old hostess. "It has come about at last," and she pressed the young man's hand most affectionately.

Magnus, we grieve to say, was reading Juana's eyes, which expressed a great deal more than her mother's eloquent harangue. He told them he really did not know who sent for him, but that he was no longer a prisoner; and desired they would be sure to tell Admiral O'Brien so. He then embraced the mother affectionately,—Juana much more so, for the tears were in the young girl's eyes, and Juan twisted his moustache, uttering sundry sentences to himself; but when Magnus shook him by the hand, and told him he would not quit Spain without leaving a remembrance for him, in return for his fidelity and bravery, the honest fellow was quite pleased, and forgave him in his heart the kiss, the last one, however, the muleteer muttered to himself that the handsome lieutenant would ever bestow upon his betrothed.

Magnus jumped into the carriage, and off went the mules; repeatedly he kissed his hand to Juana, she waved hers in return; and that was

the last time he ever beheld the Spanish maiden, whose gentle kind heart had been touched by the lieutenant's manner and appearance. On rolled the calese, Magnus O'More leaning back against the cushions, his eyes closed, but his thoughts in the land of dreams.

San Lucar de Barremede, as it is styled, to distinguish it from San Lucar la Mayor, is five good leagues from Cadiz. The road, for a Spanish road, was tolerably good, and over this the mules dragged the heavy calese at the rate of six miles an hour. It was a bright moonlight night, and the lieutenant might have enjoyed several very charming bits of scenery, but he was neither thinking of scenery nor of robbers; the insecurity of travelling over Spanish roads, even at the present day, is well known; but sixty years ago robbers and knights of the road were in their glory. However, our hero travelled the five leagues without seeing anything, and only awoke from dream-land by

the rattling of the carriage over the pavement of a spacious courtyard, at the back of an immense lofty mansion.

"Now," said our hero to himself, as he popped his head out of the calese and gazed around, "I shall very soon discover why I am brought to San Lucar."

Several attendants with torches came from the mansion; one opened the carriage door, and another, with a low bow, requested our hero to follow him. He did so, passing through a spacious hall, evidently not the front hall, followed the attendant up a wide staircase and along a corridor, and was ushered into a very handsome chamber, hung with rich tapestry and well lighted. On the table in the middle of the room was laid out a profusion of eatables and decanters of wine. A log fire blazed in the ample fireplace; altogether there was a prodigious air of comfort in the look of everything, especially when the young man contrasted it with his abode for the last four days. The domestic

requested to know if he wished anything in particular, as it should be got, if possible.

"Thank you," said the lieutenant, casting a look of satisfaction upon the delicacies on the table, "I should think no man could require anything more than what is on that table, and I confess I have a good appetite."

The man bowed, and Magnus O'More, happening to raise his eyes and look towards the door, beheld a very bright pair of dark eyes peeping in at the door, but they vanished the moment they met his.

"Humph!" muttered our hero, "they are not all of the male sex in this mansion, that's clear." So drawing his chair to the table, he selected a very tempting looking pie, and trusting it would not turn out like the pie in the fairy tales, set before the hungry Prince Talalada Dilla, he inserted his knife into the paste.

"From a prison to a palace is a contrast certainly," he soliloquised; "but it is an agreeable one."

Perfectly satisfied that there could be no revengeful motive in bringing him to San Lucar he bestowed no further thought upon his situation; but thanked the gods for present good, and made forthwith a most unexceptionable supper, washing it down with a few bumpers of most delicious wine of Xeres.

"I wish O'Brien was here,—this wine is superb," and as he held up his glass the door opened, and a gentleman in black entered the room.

Magnus rose from his chair.

"Do not let me disturb you, Senor O'More," said the old gentleman, for the stranger was full seventy years of age. "I pray you be seated."

Whilst he spoke he gazed into the features of the lieutenant, with a fixed and serious look, but also a look of great interest.

"I hope," said the Spaniard, seating himself near the fire, "that I have not prevented your making a good supper; you have had a long ride,

and for the last few days I do not suppose have fared sumptuously."

"I have been accustomed, from early boyhood, to many changes, and to every variety of diet, and sometimes none at all. Youth and strong health will take anything; but I assure you, senor, that I have now made a most excellent supper."

"You speak our language remarkably well," observed the senor. "You must have passed some time in Spain, and studied hard besides."

"I was resolved, when a mere boy," returned Magnus, "that I would speak my mother's language, if possible. Being a sailor, my destiny threw me for several years upon the Spanish main, and I took advantage of that event, and studied hard whenever I could spare time; but in Spain I have never been till the last few days."

The stranger looked very thoughtful. "Your father and mother, alas! died very young. I remember them well, and have no doubt in my

mind but that your are the son of Roderick O'More and Fernanda de Cabra. I am and have been the Duke de Cabra's physician forty-nine years, so that I may safely say I knew your lamented mother from her earliest years; indeed brought her into this world of trial, and, in her case, alas! of trouble and sorrow. I am proud to say that, besides being the Duke de Cabra's physician, I am his friend, and grieve to tell you he now lies prostrated by a severe attack of paralysis; but he is slowly, and I hope, surely recovering."

After a moment's thought, Magnus said,

"Senor, I am most anxious to know why I am brought here; knowing that all those who were concerned in my mother's marriage, suffered cruel wrong."

"Stay, young man," said the old physician; "you speak too severely. The Duke, it is true, punished those of his household who betrayed him, and assisted a stranger and a heretic to rob him of his only child, on whom he

doted—a stranger, who afterwards destroyed her soul, persuading her to renounce her faith, and embrace a creed hateful to any true Catholic."

"I am too young, senor," observed Magnus, calmly, "to enter into discussions on points of faith. Let us place religion aside. You accuse my father of robbing the duke of his only child. Recollect, senor, for you must very well remember the events of that period; my poor mother was a fond and affectionate daughter, I am told, and except where the whole happiness of her life was concerned, never disobeyed her parents, and had been betrothed from her very early years, to a man she could never either love or esteem. On her knees, long before she saw my father, she implored her sire to spare her, and not condemn her to a life of misery; for her future husband's character and disposition were well known to her. But the Count de Cabra was not to be turned from his purpose. He had selected a husband for her, and she was bound to approve his choice. She was an only child, or else she might retire

within the walls of a convent. Some time after, she beheld my father, and they became devotedly attached; all this, however, you know, but with respect to your assertion that my lamented, noble-minded father, induced her, or in any way swayed her mind so as to change her creed, it was not so. I have been told by those who knew her well and loved her, that her change of creed was from her own conviction; but, in truth, this recalling of the past is useless. Did not my father's beloved friend, Harold Fitzwilliam, disappear from the world after witnessing the marriage; he has never been seen or heard of since. A French priest, named Bellgarde, also witnessed and assisted at the marriage; he suffered, but somehow he escaped, for I met him in France, and should have received from him full proofs of my mother's marriage, but he was seized by the revolutionary soldiers, and probably perished under the axe of the accursed guillotine. Others concerned in the elopement suffered cruel imprisonment. Surely—surely, the religion of Christ

teaches forgiveness, not persecution and revenge!"

The Senor Fabrique allowed the young lieutenant to speak without interruption. He was both serious and thoughtful; but at length, looking into Magnus O'More's flushed features, he said mildly,

"In some of your remarks you are right; but, as you said, we will not argue on the past. What is done cannot be undone. I visited you to satisfy myself that you are the son of Fernanda de Cabra, and I am satisfied — you are. Your resemblance to your mother is striking, and also the tones of your voice. Your father I met at Seville; in your figure and manner, you recall him forcibly. Having thus convinced myself, I will answer your first question, as to why you were brought here. You were brought here at the earnest request of your maternal grandmother, the Duchess de Cabra. She has never forgotten the child she idolized. After her marriage with your father, she never ceased exerting

herself to soften her lord's resentment, but in vain. When she learned that a child of Fernânda's was actually in this country, and a prisoner in Cadiz, under the fearful charge of murder and robbery, her horror and anxiety became overpowering. At first she imagined some impostor was playing a deep game to save his life. On asking my advice, she sent a confidential attendant to learn particulars, and to attend your examination, and enquire of Dame Torredos about you, knowing that you were arrested in her posada. Satisfied from what that faithful woman said, and from your own examination before the alguazil mayor, which was faithfully reported to the Duchess, an order was sent for your release, and a carriage to bring you here. I must now, my dear young friend, as I aspire to call you, have an interview with your grandmother, who is besides, greatly agitated and distressed by the duke's sudden seizure. He was first attacked at his hunting lodge, but recovered sufficiently to be brought across the river, to his

mansion, in San Lucar. Some hours after reaching home, and whilst writing a letter, he was again seized with a fit, a more violent attack. All I can say and hope is, that, if the duke recovers, and I most devoutly trust he may, a reconciliation may take place, and his excellency publicly acknowledge you as his grandson. It is now very late; I will therefore leave you to seek a few hours' repose."

So saying, the duke's physician rose from his chair, pressed the lieutenant's hand, and retired, telling our hero that a domestic should conduct him to his chamber.

Magnus O'More remained in deep and anxious thought after the departure of the physician. He could scarcely believe it possible that events so untoward to all appearance, had led to the fulfilment of the dearest wish of his heart. From his reflections, he was roused by the entrance of a domestic, with lights, to conduct him to his sleeping chamber.

Following his conductor along a corridor well

lighted, he passed an extremely pretty female attendant, who had just left a chamber in the corridor. She looked at him with a very inquisitive expression on her countenance, dropped a curtsey, and passed on. Magnus entered the chamber prepared for him, and the attendant, placing the lights on the table, made a low bow and withdrew.

"Well," thought the young man, "all this is very strange," and he gazed round the lofty chamber, at the magnificent but cumbrous bed, the rich tapestry, and all the heavy gilded furni- of a Spanish grandee's mansion. "I'm not dreaming, that's certain; but a week ago who would have said—Magnus, you will sleep beneath the roof of your mother's parents, and all this to come about by being thrown overboard by a rascally set of mutineers, and afterwards taken up and imprisoned as a robber and a murderer. Verily we know not what is before us." So extinguishing the light he retired to rest, but not to sleep for several hours.

CHAPTER III.

We do not presume to say that the Roman Catholic religion has a greater tendency to foster superstition than any other. But it will generally be allowed that Spain exceeds any other Catholic country in Europe, for bigotry, superstition, and a blind belief in their priesthood, from the peer to the peasant. Sixty years, the period since the events recorded in this story, has made some difference certainly, but not to the extent that length of time would lead us to suppose, considering the extraordinary development of science and the improvement the human understanding has undergone.

We stated in a previous chapter that the Duke

de Cabra gave way to a ferocious joy on receiving intelligence that a son of Roderick O'More was not only in Spain, but in the prison of Cadiz, under a charge of murder and stripping the dead. Though not believing a particle of truth to be in the accusation, for the first alguazil mayor gave a very clear statement in his letter, and also his own view of the accusation, the duke having it in his power to gratify an insane revenge wrote the two letters already known to our readers. Having despatched these letters he paced the chamber in a state of extreme excitement and agitation. He frequently clenched his hands and muttered sundry ejaculations of gratified hatred, when suddenly he felt a strange sensation creeping over him; he staggered in his walk, felt faint, and had just time to reach his chair, into which he fell insensible, or nearly so, for during this partial insensibility he was haunted by strange and appalling visions. His especial attendant the next moment entering the room was shocked at beholding his master, as he

thought, dead. An alarm was raised, and the guests and the Duke's physician rushed into the room. The latter immediately saw that it was an attack of paralysis, and applied the proper remedies. The duke left alone with his physician began by degrees to recover.

"I have slept," he said, on opening his eyes and heaving a heavy sigh; "but," he added, "I have had a terrible dream," and he shuddered.

This was the first attack of a malady that always in the end secures its victim. The Duke de Cabra recovered sufficiently to be taken across the river to his residence at San Lucar, where the duchess was, in a state of great agitation.

The duke recovered his bodily powers in a very few hours, but his mind had received a terrible shock; and yet, strange to say, when a messenger from the second alguazil mayor arrived with a letter for the duke, giving the particulars of the second trial, the duke broke out into a violent fit of passion; called the alguazil mayor a fool and idiot, seized a pen, and wrote—

"Send your prisoner here immediately.

"CABRA."

He had scarcely written the words, when he received another and a much severer shock than the previous one.

Don Fadrique was completely in the duke's confidence, and being a kind and good man had often sought to wean his patron and friend from his insane desire of vengeance. With wonderful care, the duke had baffled every attempt of the deceased, Roderick O'More, to prove his marriage with Donna Fernanda. Every being concerned in it he had either incarcerated or removed from the world. The war with England released several who might still have lingered in confinement, in a prison or a convent.

No kinder heart existed than that of the Duchess de Cabra. Her whole life was one of mourning for her daughter, and when the grave closed over her and her husband, her thoughts centred on their child. Don Fadrique, who was in the

duchess's confidence, was aware that the duke's attacks arose from giving way to ungovernable passion, and the excitement caused by knowing that his grandson was within his grasp.

The physician communicated the contents of Don Gusman's letter to the duchess; her kind and affectionate heart was deeply affected. An intense desire to embrace her grandchild took possession of her mind; and the physician seeing that the duke would remain in a very weak and half insensible state for many days, planned the sending for the lieutenant, by making use of the duke's order. We have thus briefly explained how Magnus O'More became an inmate of the duke's mansion at San Lucar.

The duke passed a very uneasy night, and the morning following the arrival of Lieutenant O'More, at San Lucar, Don Fadrique was sitting by his bedside. The patient was at this time quite sensible in his mind, but his hitherto robust constitution had received a terrible shock. The first

words he addressed to his physician that morning were,

"Did you see, my good friend, an order addressed to the alguazil mayor, of Cadiz, and signed by me, lying on the table?"

"I did, your excellency," replied the physician, mildly.

The sufferer remained some time very restless and uneasy, but at length said, in a low tremulous voice,

"Come nearer."

Don Fadrique did draw closer to the bed, and looked anxiously in his old patron's face.

"Are you, dear friend," said the duke, "a believer in visions and dreams?"

"Not in dreams, my good lord," said the physician. "Dreams are but the thoughts not held in check during sleep. Visions are oftentimes delusions of a diseased imagination; but our religion teaches us that visions may be presented to our sight by the permission or will of the Deity, to bring about certain objects."

"Ah! Fadrique, you believe that, do you?—good. Now tell me, do you consider my life in danger? You know me well, therefore speak frankly. I do not fear death; that is the mere sinking into rest. But my mind is troubled; some acts of my life flit before me when I close my eyes, and harass me. Now if I am to die of this attack, say so."

"My lord," said the physician, with much emotion, "if you think atonement for any act of your life pressing, make it at once; do not let the approach of death be the cause of your resolution to do that which you think right. You are far from well; but I do not apprehend death will ensue from this attack."

"You have always been a true friend to me, Fadrique," said the sick man, after a pause of some moments, and with a heavy sigh. "I am satisfied I have erred, and have had a terrible warning, and a—" he hesitated a moment, and then added, "I have had a vision, or a dream, I know not which; but it presses upon my heart.

When I regain more strength, if it is God's will that I do so, I will speak to you more fully; but at present take a pen and write, I will dictate, and I think I can sign it."

Don Fadrique, without a word, drew a table with a writing desk upon it towards him, and pen in hand waited till the duke should speak. There was a pause of some minutes, during which the physician could see by the features of his patient, that a terrible inward struggle was still agitating the sufferer's breast.

At length he said, in a low yet distinct voice,

"Write to Don Calzados, the new alguazil mayor of Cadiz, thus—

"'It is my desire that Lieutenant Magnus O'More, now a prisoner in Cadiz, and falsely accused of stripping the dead, be at once liberated, but without communicating with any one—'

"Let this sentence, my friend, be marked," added the Duke—

"'But without communicating with anyone, be sent under an escort to the Spanish lines before Gibraltar, and there set at liberty; the enclosed packet then to be delivered to him.'"

"Now see, my friend, that this order be carefully carried out."

The duke sighed heavily, but assisted by the physician he put his signature to the letter, and Don Fadrique his seal. After this act he lay back, apparently very much exhausted.

The physician administered a cordial, which evidently revived his patient. Don Fadrique was not afraid of death terminating the attack the duke had just recovered from, but he greatly feared that further excitement might renew the symptoms with greater violence. But now that the intense excitement was passed, he confidently looked forward to a quick restoration to some degree of bodily vigour.

After an interval of rest the duke again addressed his friend and adviser.

"I pray you, Fadrique, take that peculiar looking key you see on my bunch; it has a handle in the form of a cross."

The physician placed the desk, a piece of exquisite workmanship, on the table near the bed, and opened it. The interior was curiously arranged.

"Press the ivory knob," said the invalid, gazing anxiously into the desk.

The physician did so, and a secret drawer became revealed. The drawer contained only a single folded paper.

"That," said the duke, laying his hand on his physician's arm, "that is the marriage certificate of my daughter, Fernanda de Cabra."

Don Fadrique's hand trembled, as he raised the paper.

"On that paper," continued the Spanish nobleman, "are the signatures of my daughter and her husband. It is also signed by the English clergyman, Harold Fitzwilliam, and by the French priest, Bellgarde; and by Padre Ignatius

and his two coadjutors; beneath these signatures is also that of Mary Torredos, Fernanda's attendant.

Don Fadrique looked at the document before him with deep emotion.

"What misery, what sorrow," he mentally exclaimed, "has been caused by the want of this document!"

"I will now," said the duke, with a sigh, "put my signature and seal to that document, and acknowledge its correctness as to time, place, and persons present," and this the invalid did with a steady and firm hand, writing the following words,

"I solemnly attest that this is the marriage certificate of my daughter, Fernanda de Cabra, and that all those persons, whose signatures are here written, were present at my daughter's marriage with Roderick O'More, an Irish gentleman, residing at Ashgrove, county Galway, Ireland; and I further acknowledge Lieutenant

Roderick Magnus O'More, born in Ireland, to be my lawful grandson.

"San Lucar,

"December 24, 1796."

"There, old friend," said the duke, a little exhausted, and kindly pressing the physician's hand, "I have atoned for the past," and with a slight sigh, he sunk back upon his pillow and closed his eyes.

Don Fadrique placed his fingers on his wrist with an anxious expression of countenance, but in a moment his features brightened.

"Good," he murmured, with a satisfied expression of countenance; "he sleeps; he will be better—he has relieved his conscience."

He then took the paper and wrote,

"Witness present, Don Esteban Fadrique, physician to his excellency the Duke de Cabra, Grand Knight, etc."

He folded the important document carefully up in another paper, and sealed it.

"This I can deliver into his own hands," soliloquised the kind-hearted physician, "far better than trusting Master Diego Calzados, who will not long be alguazil mayor of Cadiz, I predict."

Locking the desk, he placed the keys under the duke's pillow, and then summoning his special attendant, to watch during his absence, he proceeded to have an interview with the duchess.

Seated in a saloon, whose windows looked forth on the waters of the Guadalquiver where its broad tide meets the sea, sat the Duchess de Cabra and as lovely a maiden as eyes ever rested on. We must, however, describe the duchess first; age commands respect, beauty admiration. The duchess was at this time about sixty, with a wonderful preservation of the beauty of her youth. She was, however, exceedingly pale, having passed many hours of the night beside the couch of her husband, and besides being

greatly agitated, not only concerning him, but her position with regard to Magnus O'More. She had ventured on a bold step, knowing how terribly violent the duke became when thwarted in anything his mind was firmly bent on. The duchess was a tall finely-formed woman, her complexion rather fairer than the generality of Andalusian women; her hair jet black, with not a visible sign of that enemy of beauty—time—for it was still abundant and untinged with grey; her features were large, but finely formed, their expression extremely pleasing and gracious.

The young lady, whose beauty was perfectly fascinating, was the daughter of the Duke del Rio. This nobleman, the reader will remember, was intended by the Count de Cabra as the husband of Donna Fernanda. The Duke de Cabra having no son had resolved to make the children of this nobleman, who although possessing an ancient title was far from rich, his heirs. Maria del Rio was at this period eighteen. A perfect Andalusian maiden in complexion, with

magnificent hair and eyes of the darkest hue, and possessed of an exquisitely graceful form and captivating manners. At Madrid, Seville, at all the tertulias, bull fights, and pageants belonging to the Spanish court, Maria Almadovar del Rio carried away the palm of beauty.

But in vain did high-born cavalleros sigh for her approval of their adoration,—Maria del Rio seemed to have a heart cased in steel. To all appearance as innocent as a dove, she yet, we grieve to say, was but a deception. At heart she was proud, imperious, crafty,—her father's counterpart. She was the youngest of three children. Her brother, according to the custom of Spain, would inherit not only the family honours, but nearly all the wealth. Her eldest sister, about eighteen months her senior, would, according to Spanish etiquette, be first married and portioned; but the youngest daughter had nothing to expect but a convent. It chanced, however, that Maria was the father's favourite, who saw himself reproduced in that heartless girl.

He early placed her with her godmother, the Duchess de Cabra, whom she completely deceived as to her real character. Before she had reached her sixteenth year her father, from some cause or other, had lost the king's favour; court cabals ran high at this period,—the downfall, for a time, of the Spanish monarchy was approaching. In disgust the Duke del Rio retired to his castle, De Almodavar, on the banks of the Guadalquiver, between Seville and San Lucar. His son, the Count del Rio, was an officer in the Spanish guards, and was then at Madrid; whilst Maria accompanied her godmother, the Duchess, to the Duke's mansion at San Lucar.

Though the Duchess was much attached to her goddaughter, she did not think it prudent to make her acquainted with the discovery she had made of her grandson's being in Spain; neither of her project of sending for, and seeing him during the Duke's illness. But it chanced that Maria del Rio retired that night very late

to her chamber, having sat up with the Duchess, who felt deeply her husband's illness.

Her chamber window looked out into the great court yard, and she was attracted to it by the sound of carriage wheels driving over the pavement, and seeing many lights flashing across the yard. She perceived a calese, drawn by four mules, stop before the door, and several domestics with lights. Curiosity is neither confined to rank nor station; Maria del Rio was as curious as any other maiden. At first she thought it might be her father, but the calese she recognised as that of the Duchess. Some little time after her attendant, Inez, entered the room, to assist at her toilet for the night.

"Who is it, Inez, that has just arrived?"

As it very often happens that a hero is no hero to his valet de chambre, so does it occur that a lady's special and favourite attendant is much better acquainted with her mistress's disposition than her most intimate friends. Inez, who was

a very pretty and good-natured maiden, knew very well that her mistress was neither quite so innocent or so amiable as she made it appear she was.

"Well, indeed, senora," said Inez, "I have been quite curious to find out, for they were all waiting for this stranger's arrival; and in the Duchess's carriage, too! and yet I can neither find out who he is, nor where he came from."

"Madonna!" said Donna Maria, "they must be very secret to baffle your bright eyes and sharp ears, Inez; but it's a man, at all events."

"Santa Maria, yes," returned Inez; "a man, and the handsomest youth I ever saw; and I have seen many on the Prado of Madrid."

"Oh! so you managed to see this new arrival, who hides his name, and where he comes from so industriously. Where did they put him?"

"Oh, senora, there was a handsome supper laid in the saloon, and he will sleep in this corridor. He is very young,—not more, I am sure,

than twenty—but so tall and handsome— such a figure, and such an agreeable countenance—I am sure he is not a Spaniard."

"Why do you think that, Inez?" asked Donna Maria. "It appears to me that you managed to see this stranger well?"

Inez laughed, saying,—"We Andalusians are very curious, senora. So, when I saw supper preparing at so late an hour, I said to Pepe, the major-domo's factotum, 'Who on earth, Pepe, is going to sup at this hour, and my lord so ill?'

"'Ah!' said Pepe, 'my pretty Inez—' You see, senora, he called me pretty—merely to—"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Maria, laughing, "to get a place in your affections. Pepe is a handsome lad. Go on, Inez."

"'Ah! so you want to know who's going to sup—eh?'

"'Yes,' said I, 'very much.'

"'If you will promise to marry me next Easter, and give me a kiss now as a deposit, which I will return, with interest, on your ful-

filling the contract, I will tell you, Inez; and it is a grand secret.'

"I gave Master Pepe a sound box on the ear, and told him if he would not tell me I'd repeat it. Unluckily, the major-domo called him away, or I think I should have got at this secret."

"Certainly, a very curious method you employed, Inez. I think Pepe's proposition was very fair; but tell me why you think the stranger is not a Spaniard?"

"He is much fairer than our cavalleros, senora; but, though he speaks Spanish very well, and with great ease, I think, he must be a foreigner."

"Well, upon my word, considering the short time you have had for either inspection or enquiry, you have done remarkably well. Now, take my advice, and agree to Pepe's proposal, but make him tell his secret first; for men, after they gain their object, are apt to be false. So now good-night, it is very late."

"There is some mystery in all this," murmured Donna Maria, as she remained sleepless, communing with her own thoughts. "Why should

the Duchess's carriage be sent for a person no one appears to know, and if they do know they will not tell. The Duke's illness was a sudden and strange one; they say it arose from getting into a violent passion,—about what, that puzzles me; but I will find out to-morrow, or it will be very strange indeed."

The following morning, when Donna Maria breakfasted with the Duchess, after making apparently anxious enquiries after the Duke's health, and observing that her godmother looked wearied and fretted, she observed,—

"A strange senor arrived late last night, in a calese drawn by four mules. I thought, at first, that my father had arrived, for he will be sure to be here when he hears of the Duke's sudden attack of illness."

"Yes; there is no doubt of that, Maria," said the Duchess, "for a courier was instantly dispatched to him. But Don Fadrique declares he considers the Duke's danger past, and that he will speedily recover."

"I am rejoiced to hear that," responded Donna

Maria, with assumed affection in her tone and manner; but, finding her godmother made no further remark concerning the stranger's arrival, the young lady considered she had better trust to the cunning of her maid, Inez, getting the information from her lover.

After finishing her breakfast, Maria del Rio, seeing the Duke's physician enter the room, and commence a conversation with her godmother, in a low voice, retired; but, as she passed along the corridor, she suddenly came face to face with the stranger, who was proceeding to take a walk in the beautiful garden he saw from the window of the saloon. Magnus paused, and gazed, with a look of surprise and admiration, in the blushing face of the lovely girl before him; who betrayed a most becoming embarrassment. Magnus bowed low; the maiden returned the salutation, and passed on.

"Well," thought Maria del Rio, as she proceeded, with that light, elastic step, so peculiar and fascinating in the Andalusian maidens.

"Inez has very good taste indeed. He is a remarkably handsome cavallero. I wish I knew who he was. It is very strange what brings him here."

Magnus, in the meantime, indulged in something of the same kind of thought, wondering who the beautiful vision he had seen could be. But he was roused from his reflections by the Senor Fadrique coming up to him.

Magnus enquired anxiously after the Duke's health.

"I am happy to say," returned Don Fadrique, "that there is a change for the better. I now do not think that there is any danger of life. But please to follow me, the Duchess awaits your presence."

CHAPTER III.

Magnus O'More entered the saloon where sat the Duchess de Cabra, with an increased palpitation of the heart. Don Fadrique merely opened the saloon door, allowed him to enter, and then retired. The Duchess was seated on a sofa near the fire; and the first glance our hero had of her features showed him that she was exceedingly pale, and uncommonly agitated.

Hastily advancing, the young man sank on his knees, and taking her trembling hand, kissed it with much emotion, saying, as his dark eyes met hers, which were suffused with tears, "Madam, this is a happiness I never expected to experience. I should know you to be the mother of my mother amid a thousand."

The Duchess was completely overpowered; it was impossible for her not to see the striking likeness to her beloved Fernanda in every feature, but especially in the eyes of the figure at her feet. She bent her head, sobbing with emotion, and, kissing his forehead, said, in a broken voice,—"Yes; you are Fernanda's child. I want no other conviction than those features, and the tone of your voice." Then making him rise, and sit beside her, she remained, for several moments, with her face buried in the folds of her kerchief.

Magnus O'More was greatly agitated and moved; through long years the remembrance of his mother's beautiful and remarkable features had never left his mind. His grandmother retaining so singularly the beauty of her youth struck him at once. She was the living image of the portrait he had loved so dearly to gaze upon when a boy; only time had robbed the cheeks of freshness and colour, and the eyes of some of their brightness.

Recovering in some degree her composure, the

Duchess took the handkerchief from her face, and again gazed fixedly at Magnus, saying,—"How is it, my child, that you remember so well the features of a mother, alas! whose days, were short indeed? You—you must have been far too young to have any memory of her."

"True, madam," returned Magnus. "I was not more than two years old when I experienced a loss never to be replaced; but my father, who adored my lamented mother, took care I should never forget her. There was a magnificent portrait of your daughter hanging in Ashgrove House, a full length; and not a day passed, till I was nine years old, that I did not spend many a minute in looking at my lost mother's beautiful features, and wishing, alas! how often and vainly, that it had been the will of Providence to have spared her."

"My poor boy," said the Duchess, fondly, and holding his hand in hers—a sense of happiness stealing over her heart, not experienced since the hour her daughter was lost to her. "My poor

boy! and your young life has not been without its trials. I have heard vague accounts of how you were denied your name and birthright. Tell me the story of your young and early days. It has pleased God, in a strange way, to throw you on the land that gave your mother birth, and also to bring you to my arms; but even here you have suffered persecution. Tell me all,—for, before we part, I can place in your hands a document that will fully and clearly establish your legitimate birth, and your right to your father's name and estates."

"But, dear grandmother; for such you will permit me to call you?"

"Oh, yes, my child! the word comes to my heart with a grateful sound. Oh! how like your mother in look and manner, though I recognise also the noble figure and stately brow of your father."

"I was going to enquire how fares the Duke, my grandfather," said Magnus. "I would sacrifice anything to secure his blessing?"

The Duchess sighed, saying,—"His life is not in danger; and, so far, he has relented in your favour as to order your instant release from confinement, and that you should receive the proofs of your parents' marriage, and be conducted in safety as far as the Spanish lines before Gibraltar. But, alas! I fear further reconciliation impossible; but we shall try."

Magnus pressed his grandmother's hand, and expressed himself deeply grateful for her love and kindness; and then, as she wished it, gave her a brief history of his somewhat eventful life. The duchess listened with deep emotion to the recital. For nearly two hours the grandmother and grandchild continued to converse, each getting more and more pleased with each other as their confidence became mutual. The duchess informed him that her god-daughter Maria Almadovar del Rio was residing with her; and described her as being most lively and amiable. "Her father," continued the lady, "you are aware, was the intended husband of your mother.

He felt his disappointment severely, and, I must confess, exerted himself to the utmost in punishing all he thought guilty of deceiving him and your grandfather. The Duke del Rio was never a favourite of mine." As the duchess uttered these words, the door opened, and Donna Maria del Rio entered the room in a manner to lead an observer to imagine she thought her godmother alone. She paused, looked prettily confused, and was apologizing for her intrusion as Magnus rose to his feet, when the duchess called her to her side, and kindly introduced the young and handsome couple to each other.

At the word grandson, and the name O'More, Maria del Rio started and changed colour, but the next instant, with a fascinating smile, she said, "oh, godmother, what happiness you must experience, in embracing the child of your loved and ever-lamented daughter. I am so sorry to have disturbed you, but receiving this letter from my father, I came to tell you that he will be here either to-morrow evening or the next."

The duchess started, but Don Fadrique entering the room to request she would accompany him to the Duke, arrested the words on her lips. Turning to the young couple, she said, "I will leave you to get better acquainted," and, with a most affectionate look at our hero, she took the physician's arm and left the room.

For a moment Maria del Rio looked down upon the floor as if a little embarrassed, whilst her companion, struck with the exquisite beauty of her features, became anxious to cultivate her acquaintance. After placing a chair for her to be seated, he said, "it seems, Donna Maria, that my name is not quite strange to you?"

"Ah!" said the beautiful Spaniard, resuming her usual manner, "you are a close observer, Senor O'More. I certainly started at the name of O'More, for I have heard it often, even in my childhood; nevertheless, I was not aware the duchess had a grandchild living. You are the son of that Senor O'More who saved the Princess Maria from being crushed to death by the falling

of the Royal Pavilion, at the famous bull fight, in the Plaza Mayor, in Madrid?"

"Yes," returned the lieutenant, venturing to meet the dazzling and dangerous eyes of the lady beside him, "and I should like to perform the same service for you, fair lady, if it created a feeling of interest in my favour."

"Ah! Madonna, you are very gallant," returned Donna Maria, with a smile, "but do you know I should not like to be so nearly crushed or gored to death as the princess was; but pray gratify my curiosity—how have you managed to reach this mansion? Fierce war is raging between our two countries, but you really speak our language like a Spaniard."

"Fair lady," returned the lieutenant, "my story is a chapter of accidents."

By degrees the young people became very familiar, and Donna Maria was rapidly leading our hero into some account of himself, when the physician joined them, and, after a little trifling conversation requested the lieutenant would

favour him with his company for half-an-hour previous to dinner. Expressing his regret at leaving Donna Maria, which regret the beautiful Spaniard returned by a glance from her bright eyes, our hero followed Don Fadrique.

On entering the saloon where Magnus had supped the previous night, the physician motioned to him to seat himself, and, taking a chair by his side, said, "I fear, my dear young friend, that the duchess has done wrong in introducing you by your name to Donna Maria del Rio."

"Why so, senor?" asked Magnus, surprised.

"Because," said the physician, "though Donna Maria is a very beautiful and fascinating young maiden, her father, the Duke del Rio, is a very dangerous and revengeful man, and I think it would be ruinous for you and he to meet under this roof."

Magnus O'More's face flushed; the physician placed his hand on his arm in a kind manner, saying, "hear me, I will relate to you what passed just now at the duke's bedside.

"When your grandmother entered the sick chamber she went and sat by the side of her husband's couch. Your grandfather, of course, ignorant of the use made of the first order signed by him, desiring your being sent here at once, informed your grandmother of what he had done, and that he had ordered you to be conveyed safe beyond the frontier. The duchess, thinking this a favourable opportunity of trying how far she might venture on bringing about a reconciliation between you and your grandfather, said, pressing her husband's hand, 'I knew, Diego, that your heart would yet warm towards your own blood.' The duke started, and, in a hasty, agitated manner, said, 'do not misunderstand me, Fernanda. Do not suppose for a moment that I act as I have done from any love or affection for the son of Roderick O'More. No, I had a vision—perhaps, after all, a dream, but no matter—this vision or dream said, "restore your daughter's child to his fair name, and to his father's land." I have done so, but no earthly power,' he added,

almost fiercely, 'can ever reconcile me to the offspring of the man who destroyed my daughter's soul. There, leave me,' and, with a suffocating sigh, he fell back in his bed and closed his eyes.

"Your grandmother trembled with emotion—she wept, and I conducted her to her own chamber and administered a cordial. So you see you had better leave this place before the arrival of the Duke del Rio, to-morrow night."

Magnus O'More's expression showed that he greatly felt this continued, fierce, unrelenting hatred; he did not reply for a moment, but finding Don Fadrique remained silent, he said,

"I grieve to hear my grandfather still nourishes so relentless a feeling for the past, but since it is not my good fortune or happiness to receive his blessing, I will not, on any account, remain to add to my dear grandmother's distress. It is a great consolation to me, at all events, to have received her love and blessing."

As the speaker pronounced the last words,

the door was thrown open, and a gentleman of a tall imposing appearance hastily entered the room. He was in a horseman's dress, booted and spurred, and evidently had had a long ride.

Don Fadrique started to his feet, looking pale and agitated; Magnus gazed up into the intruder's features, with a strange feeling.

"Ha, Don Fadrique," said the stranger, "I have been looking for you, as I did not wish to enter your noble patient's chamber without first seeing you. How is the duke?"

"Very little better, your grace," returned the physician, leading the way out of the chamber.

The Duke del Rio paused, saying, in a haughty tone,

"Who is this gentleman I find in your company? is his name not fit for an introduction to me."

Don Fadrique was too nervous to reply; but Magnus O'More, with a flush on his cheek, rose from his chair, saying,

"I presume you are the Duke del Rio. I am

called Roderick Magnus O'More,—a name no man need shame to own."

With a flushed face and a clenched hand, the duke made a stride towards the lieutenant, and the two tall and powerful men gazed fiercely into each other's eyes.

"So," said the duke, pressing his lips hard between each word, "you are an O'More! Santiago!" and he grasped his sword.

At that moment Maria del Rio glided into the room, and laying her hand on her father's arm, said, in her sweet musical voice,

"Dear father, when did you arrive?"

This fortunate intervention gave Don Fadrique time to recover from his agitation; he was never a man of much worldly nerve, though his skill as a physician was unrivalled in Spain. He hastily approached the duke, and in a low voice said,

"I pray you, your grace, to give me a few moments' private conversation; it is necessary you should do so before you see the Duke de Cabra."

"Be it so," said Del Rio, in a haughty tone, taking his daughter's hand, who timidly cast a most expressive look at the lieutenant.

"As to you, sir," said the duke, looking O'More in the face, with a dark, revengeful expression, "we shall meet again."

"Whenever you please, my lord duke," returned the lieutenant, with a meaning smile; "to me time and place are indifferent."

To prevent further words between two such fierce natures, Maria del Rio, with a look at Magnus almost of reproach, hurried her father from the chamber, leaving our hero somewhat irritated, and at all events very serious and thoughtful.

CHAPTER IV.

After the departure of the duke and his fair daughter, our hero continued to pace the chamber in disturbed thought. He felt as if the injuries inflicted on the friends of his parents by the haughty duke ought to be avenged by himself. Two hours passed in his solitary chamber did not certainly improve his temper. He then heard a great bustle and noise in the mansion, and silence followed; but presently his door opened, and looking round he beheld the beautiful face of Maria del Rio. She motioned with her hand for him to follow her; this he did with alacrity, wondering much what she had to say to him. Having led him into her own private sit-

ting room, Donna Maria, though looking a little agitated, with a smile said,

"I fear, Senor O'More, you will think me a strange girl."

"I think you a very beautiful and charming one," replied the lieutenant, recovering his usual tone and manner; "and I thank you for the interest you have shewn towards me," and he respectfully kissed the small beautiful hand he had taken, and then led the maiden to a chair.

"The fact is," said Donna Maria, "I wish, if possible, that you and my father should not meet again; your having done so has agitated your grandmother. My father arrived quite unexpectedly; he rode over here with only half a dozen attendants, and took us by surprise. He is now with the duke, but has ordered his horses for immediate departure, when he leaves your grandfather's chamber. Now your dear grandmother prays and beseeches you to keep out of my father's way. Nay, do not flush so with anger," said the maiden, remarking the blood rushing to the lieutenant's

cheek, "recollect your grandmother's years, and her tenderness for your welfare."

"Pardon me, Donna Maria," observed Magnus O'More, "I am wrong not at once to do that which my kind grandmother, who has done so much and risked so much for me wishes me to do. I will, therefore, act as you desire, and if you please will remain in my own chamber till your father departs, provided he himself does not enquire for me."

"You are very good," said Donna Maria, with a sweet approving smile, "and your grandmot her will be happy; but you need not retire to your chamber. You can pass a couple of hours here; this is my private retiring room; there are books, and a lovely prospect over the broad waters of the Guadalquiver; so farewell for an hour or so, but do not be frightened when you hear me turn the key in the lock, and thus keep you my prisoner."

"Ah, fair lady," remarked the lieutenant, with an admiring smile, "what happier fate could a man aspire to?"

"I am not so sure of that," said Donna Maria, with a bright look, and shaking her beautiful head; "but for a time, at all events, you are my captive," and tripping lightly from the chamber, she closed the door, locked it, and took the key with her.

"Upon my honour," thought the young man, seriously, "I consider this a very dangerous game. Donna Maria is exquisitely lovely; I never saw but one face that could compare with hers, and that lovely countenance I may never see again; and yet, that one has haunted me and risen up in imagination many and many time in the lonely hours of the midnight watch, and in my night dreams, and my waking fancies, and yet Norah O'More may never bestow a thought upon one she is taught to despise. Nevertheless, I will call upon her sweet face to shield me from this dangerous Spanish maiden, with her brilliant eyes, and foot that would not crush a violet." Taking up a book, which turned out to be Cervantes' Don Quixote, he sat down, and began its perusal in its native language.

That Donna Maria was forcibly struck with the person and manners of the young lieutenant, was very evident. She was, however, no novice in love, and was much too ambitious to sacrifice either her heart or her hand at the shrine of Cupid. Lieutenant O'More struck her as being the handsomest cavalero she had ever seen. She knew also the history of his parents, her father's vindictive hatred to the name of O'More, and since the lieutenant's arrival at San Lucar she had managed to learn, partly from the duchess and partly from others, much of his past history. Thus she felt interested in his fortunes, and began to think it very possible to win his love,—her own she was ready to give. She also thought it very likely that in the end the grandson might be forgiven by the Duke, and acknowledged as his heir, and thus her ambition would be gratified. Donna Maria, with all her worldly feelings, had by no means a bad heart, and was quite capable of performing a generous action. She was peculiarly situated,

though her father's favourite. She had a brother, an officer in the king's body guard; she had also an elder sister. According to Spanish customs, Donna Maria's fate would have been a convent, for although a duke, her father, keeping up the terrible display of a Spanish grandee of the first rank, was far from rich; in fact, he built his hopes on possessing most of the property of the Duke De Cabra.

Donna Maria had trusted to her attendant, Inez, to pick up intelligence of Magnus O'More. Inez managed her lover, Pepe, remarkably well; whether she acceded to his original proposal or continued to box his ears, we cannot say, but Pepe's tongue was loosed, for he was the identical attendant sent by the Duchess to Cadiz, to bring the lieutenant to San Lucar.

In this manner, Donna Maria became fully acquainted with all Magnus O'More's adventures in Cadiz, which greatly astonished her; and with all her knowledge of the world, acquired in two seasons, amid the gaieties and dissipations of

Madrid, she was in a very fair way of really losing her heart to the young Irishman.

In less than two hours, the Duke del Rio left the Mansion of San Lucar. He had merely seen the Duke de Cabra, that nobleman being incapable of conversation. To the duchess he said little, not even mentioning the name of O'More ; but ordering his horses, left at once.

Donna Maria then came and released the lieutenant from his imprisonment, and the young couple chatted for half an hour very agreeably. Donna Maria said that her father had left, having merely rode over from his Castle of Almadovar to see how the duke's malady went on. Don Fadrique had told him that there was no danger of life for the present, and he trusted he would regain strength shortly, but it would not be wise to disturb him by conversation.

Donna Maria left our hero to attend on the Duchess, saying they should meet at dinner.

Shortly after, Don Fadrique entered the room, saying,

"My dear young friend, will you come with me? there is a gentleman in the breakfast-room who insists on seeing you. He is a naval officer."

"Ah!" exclaimed Magnus O'More, with a gratified tone. "It is my old and true friend, Admiral O'Brien. He commands at present on the Cadiz station."

On entering the saloon, our hero perceived O'Brien gazing from the window. He turned round, hearing footsteps, and, with a pleased smile, hurried forward and grasped the lieutenant's hand, saying,—"By St. Patrick, I rejoice to see you safe and sound; all's right. Upon my conscience, I thought you had been caught in a trap."

Magnus turned to introduce Don Fadrique, but the kind-hearted physician had left them alone.

"How kind you are, dear friend," said the lieutenant; "but why did you think my coming here was a trap? Did not Dame Torredos tell you I was sent for by the Duchess de Cabra?"

"No, not exactly," returned the Admiral, "as you shall hear—"

Just then a domestic entered, with wine and various refreshments upon a tray, which he placed upon the table, and retired.

"Well, upon my faith, Magnus, my boy," continued O'Brien, with a smile, "if it's a trap, it's a remarkably well-baited one."

The lieutenant smiled, filled out a bumper of Xeres, and insisted upon O'Brien's taking some refreshment.

"Willingly, my lad, willingly. Faith! it's glorious tipple, this Xeres,—by my conscience, a hogshead of this stuff wouldn't give a head-ache. Is there a petticoat in the house, Magnus?" questioned O'Brien, with a knowing look.

"There's a very dangerous pair of black eyes here, I can assure you."

"Oh, the deuce!" said the Admiral, "then it's all up. You're a fixture here, eh?" and the half of a venison pasty found its way to the sailor's plate.

"Now tell me, O'Brien, how on earth did you get here?"

"Quite easy, Magnus. I sailed in half-an-hour ago, in the Serieuse gun-brig. I wanted to overhaul the forts here, and see what had become of you at the same time; for Juana was not quite satisfied that it was not a ruse to get you into the Duke's power. So I said, as I had an excuse for coming here, I would have a look after your safety."

"But what could make Juana think I was entrapped?"

"I'll tell you,—Juan, the muleteer, was confined for several nights in the same prison as you were; but when he was ordered to be released, after you were sent to the castle, the jailor, who is a cousin of his, said to him,—'Your friend, the English officer, won't escape, Juan.' 'What makes you think that, Sancho?' asked the muleteer; who, by the way, seems to be greatly attached to you, provided you don't make love to Juana. 'Because,' said his cousin,

'I'll tell you in confidence, the Englishman has a powerful enemy in San Lucar, who changed the alguazil mayor on purpose to get him hanged; and now, finding that they can do nothing against him here, they send for him to San Lucar, where they can cut his throat with quiet consciences.' By Jove! this frightened Juana; though her mother said, bad as the Duke was, he would scarcely do that; and besides, the Duchess was the kindest being living, and that she was sure it was she who sent for you.

"'At all events,' said I, when I was told all this, 'I am going to San Lucar; and if he's in a trap, by St. Peter's toe, there will be two of us.' So now, my lad, let us hear how the land lies?"

Magnus informed his friend of his interview with his grandmother, his grandfather's illness, and his giving up to him the necessary proofs of his mother's marriage to his father; and that the Duke had given orders for his conveyance beyond the Spanish lines before Gibraltar; but when he mentioned Donna Maria, and spoke of

her beauty and fascination, O'Brien gave a long whistle, and, with a comic expression of countenance, said,—

"It's all up with you, Magnus. If you listen to this Donna Maria, adieu to your ever getting out of this country. Her father will either have you assassinated, or imprisoned in the dungeons of the infernal Inquisition, as a heretic trying to win the love of his daughter. As to the old Duke, you will never be reconciled to him, that's clear. Go, kiss your grandmother; beware of doing so to Donna Maria; and then come with me. Now, that's the advice of Charley O'Brien."

The lieutenant laughed. "Well," said he, "wait for me two hours. If I do not join you, by that time, you may—"

"Guess," interrupted the Admiral, with a growl, "that Donna Maria is dabbling with your soul Ah! those Spanish girls work to windward of a man in a marvellous manner. If you don't brace up sharp, it's all up with you. But, badinage apart, dear Magnus," continued O'Brien, more

seriously, "do you consider yourself in any danger here, now that the Duke del Rio knows who you are? You may depend he does not forget the past. A Spaniard rarely forgets his revenge."

"Well, my dear friend," replied O'More, "I do not deny that it is quite possible that the Duke del Rio nourishes the same resentment against the son as he did against the father; and possibly when he saw me here he imagined I was come to rob him, as he would style it, of my grandfather's estates, and that a reconciliation had taken place. He now knows that is not the case; and, no doubt, my grandfather has told him so. He has left, and I shall see no more of him."

"And his daughter?" said O'Brien, still serious. "Is there no danger in her fascinations? You were always a susceptible fellow, even as a middy; there was no keeping you out of scrapes, —so your old commander told me. 'Hoist a petticoat for an ensign,' he used to say, 'and then O'More would go through fire and water.'"

O'More laughed. "Make yourself easy," answered he; "I allow Donna Maria is fascinating, but I hope yet to pick a daisy from my own native soil. I shall merely stay to have another interview with my dear, kind grandmother, get the important papers she has for me, receive her blessing, and then proceed overland to San Roque, and cross the lines to Gibraltar. Have you heard what has become of the Terpsichore?"

"She's gone to Gibraltar," said O'Brien; and, filling his glass, he held it in his hand,—"Fill yours, O'More, and here's—'To the land that gave us birth,—prosperity and happiness to her sons and daughters, and may you and I yet live to greet each other on her shore.'"

"Amen to that, my friend," said the lieutenant, with a flush on his cheek, and grasping the Admiral's hand.

"Now, farewell," said the latter.

"Remember me to Juana and her mother, and to poor Juan; tell them I will not leave this land without sending them tokens of my gratitude."

"Faith, my lad," returned O'Brien, with his old laugh, "Juan will be quite satisfied with the knowledge that Juana's lips will, for the future, belong to himself, and be his undoubted property." Another fervent pressure of the hands, and the friends separated.

CHAPTER V.

Lieutenant O'More did not remain long alone after the departure of Commodore O'Brien, Don Fadrique coming to conduct him to his grandmother.

"How is the Duke?" enquired O'More of the physician.

"Well, in truth," returned Don Fadrique, "I must say he mends much slower than I hoped or anticipated,— the mental struggle has been strong. When he sleeps he dreams, and his mind wanders strangely. He is fully persuaded he has seen a spirit. He saw the Duke del Rio for a moment, but did not enter into any conversation beyond a few words, which seemed, however, to satisfy the

Duke, who left immediately, without mentioning your name. I confess to you, my young friend, that your meeting, when I recalled the past, startled me. But we must go; I fear this interview with the Duchess will be your last, as she thinks the sooner you are safe out of this country the better."

"Well," thought our hero, "I am of the same opinion."

Magnus O'More found his grandmother seated on a sofa, looking sad and dejected,—she had evidently been weeping. Sitting down beside the Duchess, the lieutenant kissed her cheek most affectionately, saying,—"I fear, my dear grandmother, that my presence here has only brought sorrow to your heart, and created trouble in your household."

"Say not so, my dear boy, for that is very far from the case; on the contrary, the sight of you has relieved a painful feeling I have experienced for years. Why you see me grieve now is, not only because we must part, but, I lament to

think, that it must be a final adieu I shall have to pronounce. I feel satisfied that there is a great struggle going on in your grandfather's breast; he has seen his confessor, who is, in truth, a good and pious man, but a great upholder of our sacred religion. I am aware that he has great power over the Duke's mind; therefore I had hopes—as he himself expressed a wish that the Duke should cease to look upon the offspring of Fernanda with aversion—that his influence, added to mine, would have weakened the memory of the past; but, alas! though modified, his feelings against you, as the son of Roderick O'More, forbid a hope of reconciliation. The Duke thinks his daughter's soul is lost,—her renunciation of the faith of her fathers cut him to the soul. You wonder, perhaps, that I should think differently; but, thank God, I do, or I should be utterly miserable. We are not all in this country such fierce bigots as we were a century ago, when the victims to faggot and stake afforded the court a state pageant; within the last few years the In-

quisition is but a name. It is twenty-eight years since a victim perished by the flames on the Quemadro,—a sister of charity was the last, a blind beatá. You have, though hitherto deprived of your just rights, gained both fame and reward; furnished with undeniable proofs of your legitimate birth, you will, on returning to your own land, be re-instated in your father's possessions."

"Alas! my dear grandmother," said the lieutenant, "I do not covet anything beyond regaining my right to a spotless name, and the acknowledgment that my beloved and lamented mother has been foully wronged. I will fairly and openly vindicate and rescue her name from false reproach. This done, I have my noble profession to fall back on."

"But, my beloved boy," said the Duchess, "why should you leave the inheritance of your father in the possession of a man who, though your uncle, cruelly and brutally expelled you from the home of your childhood, and who also

endeavoured to cast a slur on your mother's name."

A flush came over the lieutenant's cheek, for, strange enough, his thoughts, for the moment, rested on Norah; and he thought, judging by what he knew and had heard of that young girl's character, his assumption of his rights, and the expelling of her family from Ashgrove, would prove a terrible blow to her sensitive heart.

For more than an hour our hero and his grandmother continued to converse, chiefly upon the early events of the lieutenant's life, and then upon his prospects for the future. The dinner-table was graced with the presence of the beautiful Donna Maria, who introduced a more cheerful style of conversation; and after dinner, the Duchess, retiring to the chamber of her sick husband, the young people were again left together.

The evening being a remarkably beautiful one, Donna Maria proposed a walk over the splendid gardens of the mansion, which extended to the borders of the Guadalquiver.

It was scarcely possible for so young a man as Magnus, and with a heart quite free from any very strong feeling for any one female, not to be powerfully attracted and captivated by the graces and exquisite beauty of the Spanish maiden.

"I am rejoiced," said Donna Maria, as they walked side by side, "that you have not been induced to abandon your present position; the Duke will surely relent, and then, you know, that you are undoubtedly the rightful heir to your grandfather's immense possessions."

He was a little surprised at such an observation from the Duke del Rio's daughter, who must be aware her father looked forward to the principal part of the succession. However, as Donna Maria looked so naïve, so innocent, and unconscious of having uttered anything but her natural thoughts, the lieutenant said,—

"My intention in coming here, Donna Maria, had no reference whatever to the succession of my grandfather's estates. I had a much loftier purpose, which, thank God, owing to His infinite

mercy, I have accomplished. I never thought of wealth. I do not covet it."

"What was that lofty purpose?" interrupted Donna Maria, looking really surprised,—for she did not know Magnus O'More's early history, or the cruel slur cast upon his mother's name.

They were close to an arbour, facing the waters of the Guadalquiver, so celebrated in song and in romance, but which we regret to say is, after all, but a sluggish, discoloured stream, and taking the Spanish maiden's hand, he led her to a seat, saying,—"You shall hear my story; and yet, perhaps, you may think I am taxing your patience and your good nature?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" exclaimed Donna Maria, earnestly, as she let her dangerous bright eyes meet those of her young companion.

Ah, those eyes—those mirrors of the soul. —one glance, more intelligent than a thousand words. "I am afraïd," thought Magnus, to himself, "it's all up with me. I wish I had gone with O'Brien; he knew a deuced deal better than

I did, the inflammable nature of my heart. Ah, Norah! Norah!"

The very name of the Irish maiden recalled her sweet face to his imagination; a face fully as beautiful as Donna Maria's, with infinitely more of nature's own forming. Checking the words that were on his lips, O'More sat down beside his fair companion, who certainly experienced a stronger interest in the gallant and handsome sailor than she had ever felt for any cavalero of her native land. Magnus gave her a brief outline of his short career. He spoke modestly, yet with sufficient spirit to create a deep interest in his companion, who, well acquainted with the world, became at once aware that no prospect of mere wealth would influence the feelings or actions of the young sailor, and therefore she determined to change her mode of action.

How the maiden would have acted we know not, and it is very doubtful how the interview would have terminated, had not Don Fadrique made his appearance in front of the bower.

Magnus O'More dropped the beautiful hand he had just taken possession of, to enforce no doubt, the attention of Donna Maria, who instantly rose, and as she left him to meet the physician, she said earnestly, and with a most eloquent look,

"Be not too hasty; think well before you determine to leave this land for ever."

The lady had no sooner disappeared in the mazes of an orange grove, than Don Fadrique came and sat down by our hero.

"How is the Duke?" questioned the lieutenant.

"I really think," returned the physician, "easier in mind and in body. He feels satisfied that he has acted rightly, and he thinks you are now on your way to Gibraltar."

"Then I must abandon all hope of obtaining his blessing," said the lieutenant.

"For the present, my dear young friend, I should say so. Your grandmother herself wishes you to leave, to incur no risk by a longer stay. Your interests will be incessantly cared for by her; she will watch her opportunities. She also

justly dreads the Duke del Rio; who is to be feared, a man of vindictive and passionate feelings and temper. The hatred he felt for your father is still strong in his heart. Thus, much as your grandmother grieves over your departure, her heart will feel less oppressed, when convinced you are in safety, and amongst your own countrymen. To night, she will herself give you the documents, so important to your future interests, and she proposes that you set out at day-break to-morrow; horses, and a confidential attendant, with a safe conduct to pass you through the Spanish lines, will be ready for you. It is only a short two days' journey, and she would rather, for several reasons, that you should go that way than return to Cadiz, where you might chance to be detained as a prisoner of war, so that even your friend, Commodore O'Brien, might not be able to protect you."

"Whatever, my dear sir," said our hero, earnestly, "conduces to the happiness of my dear grandmother, I will perform without a

murmur. Therefore I shall be ready for departure at daybreak."

The physician pressed the lieutenant's hand, and then arose, saying,

"We will now go to the Duchess; she is waiting for you."

On joining his grandmother in the saloon, our hero sat down beside her. She took his hand affectionately in hers.

"I suppose, my dear boy," she said, "that Don Fadrique has communicated to you the sad intimation of our parting. You will do me justice in thinking that this determination is only come to through a sincere conviction that any other cause of proceeding would be hazardous, and detrimental to your future career. Short as has been our intercourse, it has been a source of delight to me. I have embraced the child of my loved Fernanda, and it will be a blessed consolation to me to think hereafter that her child is worthy of all the love I would and do so willingly bestow upon him."

"Dear grandmother," said Magnus, with much emotion, "from my boyish days, I have pictured to myself a meeting such as this, the dream I have indulged in has been realized; therefore I ought to be, and indeed am deeply grateful for this realization of my wishes. You have enabled me to dispel the cloud that hung over my mother's name, and to clear my father's memory from reproach. All this appears to me like a dream, so suddenly and surprisingly has Providence ordered it. Had I only received my grandfather's blessing, I should be too happy."

"Ah! Madonna," returned the Duchess, "if that event could have taken place, we should not now separate; yet, with time, and if God spares my husband to me, it may come; as it is, we must bow to the will of Providence. To-night, Don Fadrique will bring you a casket, which will contain all the documents you require. I have added a remembrance, to remind you of her who will never cease to think of you," and the kind-hearted Duchess wept unrestrainedly.

Magnus was a youth of strong feeling, noble and generous by nature; by his words, he allayed the agitation and grief of his grandmother. For some time they conversed, and the Duchess became more calm and resigned, when Donna Maria entered the room, and then the evening meal was brought in.

Maria del Rio looked serious and thoughtful. Magnus exerted himself to overcome the sadness of the Duchess and the seriousness of Donna Maria. The former spoke openly of our hero's departure at daybreak. The Spanish maiden made no remark, but at times, her eyes met the lieutenant's with a strange and meaning expression. She rose shortly after supper, saying she would leave her godmother and her grandson to themselves to bid adieu, and then holding out her hand to the lieutenant, she said, looking down,

"I too, must say good bye, Senor O'More; and also add I regret our acquaintance is of so short a duration; but my godmother, no doubt, acts for the best."

Magnus took the beautiful hand held out to him, after the fashion of his native land, and pressed his lips upon it, perhaps a little too fervently, for he certainly felt an unusual palpitation of the heart. He said a few words in a low voice, as he led the maiden to the door, which caused the hand he reluctantly relinquished to tremble a little in his grasp; as she glided from the room, she whispered,

"Beware of going overland to Gibraltar," and raising her finger in a warning manner, she disappeared in the corridor.

The Duchess was so absorbed in her own thoughts and sad reflections, that she paid no attention to this little scene.

Magnus started with surprise at Donna Maria's words. What could she mean? Approaching the Duchess, he sat down beside her; but we shall not describe the parting of the grandmother and grandson. Both were greatly affected, and Magnus O'More retired to his sleeping chamber,

somewhat sad and thoughtful. Shortly after, Don Fadrique entered with a richly ornamented casket under his arm, which placing on the table, he sat down beside the lieutenant.

"Here is the key of yonder casket, my young friend," said the physician, giving the lieutenant one he took from his vest. "In that casket your grandmother has placed every necessary proof you will require; there is a strong double leather case with straps, to put your treasure in, which I advise you to strap to your own back, as there are jewels within it to a large amount,—they were those intended for your lamented mother. When this war ceases, the Duchess hopes to be able to communicate with you; and she does not quite despair but that you may meet again."

Magnus said all he could on the occasion,—thanked the worthy Spaniard for his kindness, and, with many affectionate remembrances to his grandmother, took leave of Don Fadrique; who, on parting, told him the Duchess had selected

one of her favourite domestics, Pepita Mercador, to accompany him, and that he might trust him with his life.

Magnus O'More had remarked this Pepita Mercador,—a handsome, well-made youth, the same who had accompanied him from Cadiz. Directly after the physician's departure Pepita entered the room, bringing a handsome mantle, and a pair of splendidly-mounted pistols, which apparently, to judge by the barrels, unusually long ones, a man might venture his life upon; a good and handsome dragoon sword completed his equipment.

"Well, Pepita, this is good preparation for the road," said our hero, taking up the pistols, and examining them with a pleased look; "these are serviceable weapons, and would, in a steady hand, bring down an enemy at sixty yards."

"Carambo! I should not like to stand for your excellenza at eighty," said the Spaniard.

"Well, there's no saying how far a bullet may go," said the lieutenant, opening the pistol-case,

to load the weapons. "Are your roads, Pepita, as famous for brigands as in the days of Cervantes?"

"Madonna! senor, they are not bad,—that is to say, their reputation is not lost for want of gentry of the road; but, carambo! your excellenza, a pistol shot would scatter a dozen. You meet them now and then at the ventas, disguised as gitanos or contrabandistas; but, vamos! we are two, well-armed, and not afraid. Santiago! we will pepper their hides if we meet them."

"Very good, Pepita,—you are a lad of mettle, we shall do famously; but where do your guardas del caminos hide themselves? those gentry are paid to keep the king's highway clear of brigands, thieves, contrabandistas, and gitanos."

"Santiago, senor, you can hire half-a-dozen of these brave gentry; but the moment they hear the well-known words, 'Bocca abago!' diavolos! they are off,—catch them who can."

"Useful guards, in truth, Pepita. So, when passengers hear the words, 'Mouth to the ground,'

they measure their length on Mother Earth, I suppose?"

"Carambo! senor; it's wise."

"Then, Pepita," said our hero, "what's the use of these weapons?"

"Santiago! your excellenza, the look of them is good."

The lieutenant laughed. "I trust you have the courage, Pepita, to pull a trigger?"

"Vamos! senor; you shall see,—I'm not a guardas del caminos."

"We shall do famously," said our hero. "So now good-night; call me at the peep of day."

Pepita retired; as he passed along the corridor, he heard a light footstep behind him,—and turning, he beheld Donna Maria's favourite attendant.

"Ah! my pretty Inez," said her lover, "are your beautiful eyes open so late? I thought you were fast asleep, and dreaming of me. So you are come to say adieu again?" and the youth slily slipped his arm round the slender waist of the maiden.

"Do keep quiet, Pepe!" said Inez. "I bade you good-bye two hours ago, Madonna! one would imagine you were going to Mexico, instead of a two days' ride to San Roque."

"Vamos! my little darling," said Pepe, insinuatingly; "but one might be more readily shot on the road to San Roque than across the seas to Mexico."

"Oh, dear! there's no fear of your being shot, Pepe," said the girl, with a laugh, and pinching the youth's ear, to keep him off; "the report of a pistol would frighten away the little wits you have. But keep quiet till I tell you something serious, and very particular."'

"I'll shut my eyes, Inez, and listen to you,—your eyes are brighter than the flame of the lamp you hold."

"And burns your heart, as its flame does your fingers," and Inez maliciously applied the blaze to Pepe's fingers,—a proceeding that caused her lover to seek revenge on her lips.

"Now really, Pepe, listen to me," said Inez,

pouting,—"Does this handsome Englishman really intend going to San Roque overland?"

"Carambo! my beauty; how else would you have him to go."

"Very well, you have answered my question. So he will go? Well, men are as obstinate as mules. Now, tell me, do you not know that there is a venta called 'Dormagos' on the road between Puebla and Cavalos?"

"Santiago! Inez, you have been studying a map,—to be sure there is; it is a good venta, and we sleep there to-morrow night,—for a good reason—it is the only venta for miles."

"Here," said Inez, taking a net purse from her bosom, and handing it to the surprised Pepe, who heard the gold within it chink musically as the maiden shook it. "Why don't you take it, stupid?" said the girl, "it is for you."

"Santiago! and what am I to do for this—pay you in kisses?"

"Not exactly at present," said the maiden, "but you must not go to that Venta de Dormagos; you must avoid it."

"Where are we to sleep then, Inez?" said Pepe, rubbing his head; "there is not another venta either this side or the other, less than five leagues."

"Go another road; the senor will not know the difference," said Inez.

Pepe thought for a moment, and then said, "It's to be done, but we shall have to travel four leagues over a frightful road, and cross the Sierra Sidonia."

"The mountain air will do you good—it's bracing," and the maiden was moving away.

"But, Inez caros," said Pepe, imploringly, "what's the reason we must avoid this venta?"

"Madonna! that's my secret; you had yours."

"But, Santiago! Inez, I told you mine for certain considerations."

"Buonos, Pepe, so will I," said Inez, laughing, "but mind, if you do not obey orders I'll never, never marry you,—so mind!" and off ran the maiden, but immediately returned, saying, "your stupidity nearly ruined me; you must give the English officer this," and she pulled

forth a sealed letter, without direction, "give him this some time to-morrow; and now, mind! if anything goes wrong, I'll—"

"What?" said Pepe, anxiously.

"Marry the Duke del Rio's valet, Gil," and off Inez ran.

"Vamos! here's a mystery," said Pepe, holding the undirected letter in his hand, and turning it over and over. "I hate mystery. Now I recollect, I saw this English sailor with his lips very close to Inez's face; she said he was whispering a message. Santiago! she looked very red in the face, but she said at the time, 'it's all about Donna Maria.' Ah, the Donna is in love with him—ah, that's it. He is handsome, but what's that to do with the Venta de Dormagos, which is within three leagues of the duke's castle of Almadovar? Well, we shall see," and, putting the letter into his vest, he retired.

CHAPTER VI.

WINTER in Southern Spain is, by no means, to be disregarded, as a season requiring no precautions. When it does come, it is extremely severe; but in Andalusia its touch falls lightly. Nevertheless, it is inclement by fits and starts, and when rain falls, it is in a deluge. When Magnus O'More was startled out of an uneasy slumber by the knocking of Pepita it was just dawn, and, as it happened, a remarkably fine morning. The lieutenant had passed but an uneasy sleepless night, an event not common to him, for young, ardent, and high-spirited, he seldom allowed his mind to disturb his rest. But so many strange events and occurrences had

taken place within the last few days, added to a strong feeling of regret at parting from his grandmother, that he lay awake for hours, full of thought. Donna Maria's beautiful features, when he did sleep, appeared floating before him, reproaching him for leaving; then her features changed into the sweet, expressive countenance of Norah, with Juana's dark eyes gleaming over her shoulder; suddenly they vanished, and his friend O'Brien appeared, presenting him a daisy, and saying, "this is the daisy, my lad, you are destined to pick from your own green soil."

Strange fancies and strange faces haunted his slumbers, so that when Pepita knocked he gladly sprang out of bed and began his toilet, which he very speedily finished, and then Pepita ushered him into the breakfast room, where a substantial repast awaited him.

Having satisfied his appetite, Magnus O'More strapped the casket on his back, threw on his mantle, and securing his pistols, prepared to

depart; Pepita leading the way. There appeared to be only one or two male domestics stirring in the mansion, and on gaining the court-yard he perceived a groom holding two handsome grey horses, ready for the road. Placing his pistols in the holsters, he mounted the most spirited and powerful of the two horses, and, giving the groom a piece or two of gold, started forward on his journey, followed by Pepita, with a short carbine strapped to his back, like a chamois hunter.

He did not depart without raising his eyes to the upper windows of the mansion, all the lower ones being barred after the Spanish fashion. As his glance passed along the row of blinds he fancied he perceived one with the jalousies drawn partly up, and the drapery parted in the middle; he even imagined he saw the outline of a female form, but whether Donna Maria was the fair gazer forth, or Inez watching the departure of Pepita, who could say? Full of thought, the traveller spurred on, following the road that lay direct before him. He rode very slowly, for he wished

to observe the appearance of San Lucar Borrameda, a place so full of recollections of the past. It appeared as if it was guarded without and within by gloomy old convents, from which all life seemed to have departed.

The town itself looked a fine old place, built upon a narrow flat bordering the Guadalquiver, which here ends its course, and becomes lost in the broad waters of the Atlantic.

Part of the town, he perceived, stood upon a rising bank, and had an extremely picturesque look, mingled with towers, spires, and the trees of many gardens. Here, in days of old, the Roman galleys grounded, and were drawn up at a point where Roman superstition erected a temple to Hercules; here the Carthagenian and Phœnician mariner, even before the Romans, bartered their wares with the half-savage Cellurians. Even the terrible Northmen ploughed the waters of the Guadalquiver, as far as Seville, which they sacked and burned; and then, laden with spoil, spread their canvas for their far off northern homes.

San Lucar, however, was at the height of its prosperity at the time when the golden spoils from America were landed on her shores.

Magnus O'More, to drive away thought, let his mind rest on the past; his imagination became exceedingly busy with the heroes of antiquity. As he proceeded, the road, after leaving San Lucar at a smarter pace, began gradually to lose its smoothness, and he no longer wondered at the bumps and jolts he received in the calese on his journey from Cadiz to San Lucar.

Pepita struck off from the main road leading to Cadiz, and followed a pretty good but rough one conducting into a wild but picturesque country, passing many mules heavily laden. About one o'clock in the day they stopped before a miserable venta to refresh the horses, and to escape a violent shower of rain which burst suddenly upon them. A five hours' ride had restored our hero's appetite, and weakened his regrets at leaving the beautiful Donna Maria; he thought more of his dear, kind grandmother, for the impres-

sion made by the Spanish maiden's beauty was after all but transitory.

Entering the only chamber the posada possessed for receiving travellers, and which, as the Frenchman said, served for parlour, and kitchen, and everything, Magnus demanded of the very untidy and unprepossessing landlady what he could have to eat. The woman was quietly seated on a low chair, and looking up into the speaker's face, said the single word,

"Baccalao—(dried salt fish). Where do you come from," she added; "and where are you going to?"

"Faith, you take it easy," muttered the lieutenant, looking at the lazy hostess, who never stirred. "I do not like baccalao; have you any eggs?" and he recollected the nice omelette the pretty Juana had cooked for him at Petri.

"Eggs, indeed. Hens don't lay in January."

"The deuce they don't," cried the sailor; "I know better than that; perhaps you have a priest

here, who likes omelette as well as Padre Ignatius."

"Baccalao," grinned the owner of the hostel, getting up; "baccalao, from Monday to Saturday."

"What do you eat on Sunday?" questioned the lieutenant.

"Baccalao," returned the woman, beginning to blow up the fire.

"The deuce take your baccalao," exclaimed the visitor, turning round, hearing Pepita laugh. "I say, Pepita, this woman never eats anything but baccalao, and by jove! the smell is quite sufficient for me," looking up at a row of dried fish suspended from the roof.

"I thought of that, senor," said Pepita, with a smile, "and knew you would require lunch at midday, so I popped a fowl and a tongue into my pouch, and a bottle of Xeres; and here they are."

"Santiago! Pepita, you're a trump," cried the lieutenant, as the worthy Spaniard drew forth the

articles just named; at the instant laying a cloth with the grace of an experienced waiter, and in a minute or two our hero was employed diminishing the fare before him. The satisfactory progress he made with the fowl and tongue quite satisfied Pepita that his master for the time was very lightly in love, if in love at all.

"Well, thanks to the saints," muttered Pepita, as he sat down to finish the viands, "if I am in love with the pretty Inez she's in love with me; I feel satisfied of that. I have nothing to fret me, so I can afford to leave only the bones."

"Well, Pepita, this is all very well," observed the lieutenant, coming back after a short stroll around the venta; "but are all the ventas we shall come across between this and San Roque only provided with baccalao?"

"Carambo! senor, I am sorry to say it is the case."

"Why, how's that; did you not promise we should pass the night at a famous posada. I remember now, Los Dormagos?"

"Yes, senor," returned Pepe, rubbing his chin; "but that's rather out of our way. I am going to take you a much shorter road."

"Better, amigo, go the longer; your stock of provisions are exhausted, and by Jove! I can eat anything but baccalao; the smell would poison a ship's crew. We have salt fish ourselves, but, Santiago! not with such an odour as that hanging over our heads."

"It is not so bad, senor, when it's cooked; we shall save five leagues."

"Never mind the five leagues. I have a lively recollection of a night I spent at Chicalana; they certainly charged me nothing for my bedfellows, but, nevertheless, I'll excuse their company, and if you travel over short cuts, you are sure to meet with miserable posadas, and lively bedfellows."

"What shall I do?" muttered Pepe, as he proceeded to bring out the horses.

O'More having paid the landlady quite as much as if he had consumed half a dozen of her

baccalaos, was soon again on the road, Pepe resolving to deceive his master, who could know nothing of the route; he had too vivid a remembrance of Inez's threat to hazard its fulfilment.

For two hours they rode on, and then began ascending a very steep hill, in descending which, they overtook a cavalero, mounted on a very fine mule, and armed to the teeth, attended by a muleteer, with two led mules, on whose backs a variety of packages were strapped. The Spaniard was wrapped in an enormous brown mantle, that floated out behind him like a tent; he had a carbine strapped to his saddle, and a pair of huge pistol holsters, each large enough for a blunderbus.

After the usual "God save you," &c., the stranger said politely, "as we travel the same road, let us talk."

Magnus checked his horse with a smile, for he was aware that the Andalusians are the most loquacious people in all Spain.

The traveller appeared to be a man about forty

years of age, tall, meagre, and with a villanous look. The first question a Spaniard asks when he meets a fellow traveller, is—

"Where are you going?"

Magnus said simply, "to San Roque."

"Ah!" said the stranger, "then you will sleep to-night at the best posada in this part of Andalusia. The Venta de los Dormagos?"

"Yes!" observed the lieutenant, "I am determined to make that posada my resting place; though my attendant says there is a shorter road."

"Hombre!" exclaimed the traveller. "He must be a madman to take that road; if you do, you must either sleep at the top of the Sierra Sidonia, or in a shepherd's hut. No, sleep at the posada where I shall stop, and to-morrow, by early rising, you may reach your destination before night-fall. But you are not of this province?" continued the stranger.

"Not exactly," said our hero.

Just then they came to a cross road, with a

huge stone cross erected on the right hand side Pepe rode up, saying,

"This is our road, senor,"

"Hombre de Dios, amigos, are you mad?" said the traveller, gazing at Pepe. "Do you want to get lost in the wilds of the sierra; you are too late in the day to attempt the passage."

"Vamos!" fiercely exclaimed Pepe, with a look at the Spaniard. "If we chose to go, does it concern you. Why—"

"But, Pepita, my good fellow," interrupted the lieutenant, "I wish to sleep to-night at the posada De los Dormagos; I'm in no hurry. This road is a tolerably good one, and that by the stone cross, looks detestable."

So he and the traveller pushed on at a smarter pace. Pepita called on all the saints in the calendar; he made a pull at his hair, felt his throat, uttered an anathema against the lying pedlar, as he called the traveller, fancied he saw Inez holding out her hand to Gil, the Duke del

Rio's valet, and then dug his spurs into his horse, and galloped after his master.

Just as the sun set, the travellers caught sight of the Venta de los Dormagosa — more wild or more extraordinary defile or gorge, it was scarcely possible to see—through which the road wound. In every variety of form and shape rose lofty mountain peaks, over which hung gloomy masses of clouds, tinged with a deep lurid crimson by the setting sun.

The crags around rapidly began to lose their ragged outlines, as a thick column of mist rushed down the ravines and valleys, whilst a piercing chill breeze began tc rise and sweep past them with a warning murmur.

"It is well," said the traveller, "that you followed my advice; here we are; this night will be one of storm and rain, and woe betide those caught on the sierra in such weather as this promises to be. You will find this venta a right good one; formerly it bore rather an evil name,

for harbouring contrabandistas; and those gentry, when their trade is slack, are not very particular how they obtain the means of leading a jolly life; but thanks to the war, they are fully employed, and would not condescend to take a purse."

"An agreeable country to travel through," said Magnus, laughing, as he dismounted at the door of the Posada de los Dormagos. No bustling waiter or ostler, or bowing landlord greeted the travellers stopping at the posada, as is usual in most other countries, but lights flashed from the windows, and loud and boisterous laughter sounded from the interior. The lieutenant looked at the house; it was a large, substantial building, with ranges of outbuildings right and left of it. The weather was rapidly breaking, for strong gusts of wind swept up the ravine, and large drops of rain began to fall.

"Come, Pepe, we are lucky; confess that your short cut would have been a bad one."

"Ils O rico O Burgado, senor," said Pepe,

"so we must make the best of it; we must keep our eyes and ears open, for we were warned not to come here."

This observation recalled the warning received from Donna Maria, which he had thought was only made to detain him at San Lucar; and caring little for danger or peril of life, he had been accustomed to risk every day, Magnus walked on, and entered the posada, followed by the Spaniard, who, by dint of shouting and cursing, had induced a couple of attendants to come out and assist in carrying his merchandize into the venta.

Here, and everywhere in the province of Andalusia, the sole fire-place in the house is that of the kitchen. The kitchen of the Posada de los Dormagos was immense; besides the great fire-place there were curious kinds of holes in the wall, which charcoal was burning ready for use in cooking. Sitting on each side of a heavy oak table, covered with a dingy cloth, were twelve or fourteen sturdy, swarthy individuals, with sun-

burnt features, and very long black hair, beards, and moustaches; they had a huge mess of baccalao before them, and several pitchers of wine ranged along the table; an immense dish, with something in it swimming in oil, also graced the board. What particularly attracted our hero was, that each man carried a brace of pistols, and a long knife in his belt; and, leaning against the wall, were a dozen short, heavy carbines. Even at their supper these men remained armed. They all looked up as the new arrivals entered the kitchen, cast an enquiring look at the tall, strong frame, and active-looking figure of the lieutenant, and then resumed their meal.

The landlady and three strong, hard-featured girls were in the kitchen, and all singularly busy. After the usual salutations on entering a Spanish posada, the landlady enquired where they came from.

"From a very hungry place," said Magnus O'More. "Can you provide me with a private chamber and a good supper?"

The landlady was commencing with the word, "bacca—"

The lieutenant interrupted her with a laugh, saying, "no, no, none of that excellent fish. A fowl and an omelette, and a bed to myself will content me."

"Ah!" remarked one of the men at the table, "he's a Frenchman, the pulaga and chincha will disturb his rest," and then they all laughed boisterously, with their mouths crammed with baccalao.

"Well," said the woman "if you are willing to pay you can have a room, and a bed to yourself, and a good supper, too,—rest satisfied."

"You shall be paid what you please," replied our hero, pleased at this promise, for he was both tired and hungry.

"Will you—" asked the landlady, turning to the companion of the lieutenant, "will you sup with the senor?"

"Hombre, no," returned the Spaniard, "the senor lives too well for a poor travelling pedlar. I can eat baccalao here by the fire."

O'More made no remark; he preferred being alone. Two of the girls then prepared to usher him to a chamber, one carrying a brazier of kindled charcoal, and the other lights. He followed into a tolerably large apartment, but cheerless enough, its sole furniture a very low table, two chairs, and a stool, the walls merely white-washed. Placing the brazier in the wide fire-place, the ardent charcoal soon diffused a certain amount of heat through the room.

"Who are the men below eating their supper?" questioned O'More, as one of the girls drew the table near the fire, covered it with a cloth, and placed the lights upon it.

"Men from Boza going to San Roque," returned the girl; "they are contrabandistas, and have mules with them; they will meet their comrades coming from San Roque, and then carry the goods they will have with them into the country; it's a flourishing trade now."

"Well," thought our hero, as he cast aside his mantle and unbuckled the casket, laying it on

the table, "it's poor travelling, at the best, in this country; they are about three centuries behind old England in the comforts of life."

Shortly after Pepita entered the room.

"Have you got good quarters for the horses?" demanded the lieutenant.

"Carambo! senor, I have, and hot quarters for ourselves!"

"I do not feel it so remarkably hot, amigo, What makes you think so?"

"Santiago! your excellenza, Inez told me if I valued her favour or your life, not to come here; and now that meddling pedlar, who is eating baccalao as if for a wager, upset my plans, and has forced you to come into the very frying-pan that I wished to avoid. Did you see those gentry below, senor? Did you ever look at a better collection of cut-throats. They are just the lads to cry out 'boca abago!'"

"They are contrabandistas, Pepita; what do they want with us?"

"Santiago! that's all humbug, senor; they are brigands."

"Your imagination is running away with you, Pepita. What could your pretty Inez know about brigands?"

"Santos dios, senor! what an ass I have made of myself," said Pepita, fumbling all over his doublet, "I have forgotten to give you the letter Inez gave me for your excellenza."

"What letter?—was it one from Donna Maria?" asked the lieutenant, anxiously, and holding out his hand; "if so, it may explain why she warned me against this journey."

"Santiago, senor! I have lost my wits altogether, I was not to give you the letter till we reached San Roque."

"It's too late—hand it here," returned our hero, with a slight palpitation of the heart.

Pepita produced the letter, but very reluctantly. "I've botched this business," he muttered. "Inez said she would marry Gil if I did.

Carambo! if I had that pedlar in a snug place, I'd make his ribs ache—especially now that he is so full of baccalao."

"There," said the lieutenant, taking the letter, "go and hurry those women with my supper, and keep your eye on the gentry below; you and I ought to be a match for the lot if they mean anything."

"Santos dios!" muttered Pepe, as he left the room, "match for a dozen fierce devils, with pistols and knives enough for a regiment. Vamos, I wish we were on the summit of the Sierra; and yet—" he paused as a loud blast swept past the house, and a storm of rain and hail beat against the casements. "Well, it is a bad night, no mistake in that; if there were only four, or even half-a-dozen of them, it would not be so very bad, seeing that this Englishman is a regular fire-eater; but a dozen! santiago!" and he caressed his throat. "It is very bad!"

CHAPTER VII.

Magnus O'More anxiously opened the undirected and crumpled letter he had received from Pepita, and continued to read its contents till the two attendants of the posada and Pepe made their appearance with the supper. Carefully folding up the letter he put it in his pocket, and then turned to discuss the really good supper set before him. Pepe stood in attendance, and watched his master very keenly.

"Well, carambo! things cannot be so bad," thought the valet; "he's making a most unexceptionable supper, and certainly if one's throat is to be cut, it's scarcely worth while—"

"Come, Pepe, this is good fare and well

dressed," said the lieutenant; "you gave this posada a good character, which it deserves. Uncork that wine; if it is as good as the viands, we are well lodged."

"Vamos, senor, that depends," said Pepe, pouring out the wine; "but may—"

"There, sit down, Pepita," said the lieutenant, drawing his chair nearer to the fire, and placing his wine and a glass on the stool. "Eat your supper comfortably; afterwards we'll consult what's to be done."

"Madonna!" and the worthy valet crossed himself, "then there is something to be done; however, there's an old proverb, so I will even sup, if it is to be my last."

Pepita very nearly finished what remained on the dishes, fortifying himself with a bottle of really good wine. After this, feeling valiant, he said to our hero, who was regaling himself with a cigar,

"Well, your excellenza, what's to be done? Any chance of having our throats cut?"

"By jove! there is, Pepe, if we are fools enough to offer them, for that purpose, to the rascals below."

"Ah, then they are brigands?" muttered Pepe.

"Not a doubt of it, amigo," returned the lieutenant. "Now, tell me, whereabouts are our horses?"

"In a shed by themselves, senor; the principal stable is full of mules, and I heard those cut throats say they expected a dozen more comrades before midnight."

"That would make four and twenty of them," said our hero; "the odds would then be against us in earnest."

"Carambo! yes, senor, bad enough as it is; but what did the letter say, your excellenza?"

"Why principally that if we slept at the venta, De los Dormagos, we should have a very long sleep of it, indeed;" and the lieutenant quietly filled his glass, whilst poor Pepita wiped the perspiration from his brow; and yet the valet

was by no means deficient in courage, but the number of the enemy had made him nervous.

"It appears a wild night, Pepita."

"It's a frightfully dark and stormy one, senor, and it rains and hails alternately."

"Perhaps that's all for the better, Pepe; I have passed many such at sea."

"Madonna! senor, but we must not wait for the arrival of the other dozen."

"No, amigos, I don't intend it," returned the lieutenant. "Do you think you could manage to saddle the horses without being remarked or noticed by any one; for we must ride back to Cadiz. I shall not continue the journey to San Roque."

"It's an awful night, senor," and Pepe passed his fingers over his throat, with a sigh. "Still it's better to trust to the elements than those brigands with their long navidos; but what they want to cut my throat for puzzles me."

"Why, Pepe, that's easily accounted for, it's a capital way of having a secret kept; now answer

my question—can the horses be got out?—for once on their backs, we might defy pursuit."

"Madre de Dios, you are right, senor. I can manage to do that easily; but how will you, senor, contrive to leave the house?"

"Leave that to me, Pepita. After you have saddled the horses, lock the stable door, return to the kitchen, and order a bottle of wine, and sit down. When I think you are seated there I will enter the kitchen, and say to you, 'have you examined the horse's shoes, as I should like to have them removed before starting in the morning?' I shall then be ready for departure, and will leave ample funds on this table for our entertainment."

"Santiago, senor, will you pay for their harbouring villains to cut our throats?"

"Oh! they no doubt are quite innocent, and know not that that these villains are aught but contrabandistas, so now lose no more time."

"But, senor, I must get my pistols and carbine out of the kitchen."

"Better lose them than attract attention, Pepita."

"Leave me alone for that, senor. Carambo! I can outwit those rascals in that at all events."

So saying, Pepita descended into the kitchen; by this time the men had supped, the table was cleared, and jugs of wine replaced the eatables. Cards, and dominoes, and dice were then employed to wile away time.

"Come, comrade," said one of the men to Pepita, and holding up a pair of dice, "I'll throw you for a silver dollar."

"Done," said Pepe, pulling out one, and placing it on the table; "it's not the first dollar I've won with the bones."

"Vamos! here goes," and the brigand rattled the box, and then paused,—"first throw, or best two of three?"

"What, three throws for a paltry dollar? Santiago! one throw, and the highest wins."

"Carambo! here goes," and the brigand dashed down the box; his comrades all regarding

the players, as a dollar was a good stake. "Ten!" said the brigand, snapping his fingers, "the dollar's mine."

"Not yet," said Pepita; and, taking the dice, he said, "I'll take you three to one!"

"Carambo! done," roared the brigand. Pepita threw, and a cheer broke from the group, for Pepe threw only nine.

Putting the amount of his loss on the table, he said, "Wait till I come back from the stable; I've plenty more, and won't be beaten easily."

"Bravo! we'll feather you," shouted the man, as he pocketed the two dollars; "don't be long?"

"Give me a lantern, girl, that I may be back soon," and walking over to the place where he had deposited his carbine and pistols, he quietly took them up.

"Eh, comrade," said some of the men, looking at Pepita, "what are you going to do with your arms?"

"Discharge them, of course," replied the valet. "You don't think I am going to let my master

trust to weapons which have been exposed to the wet this evening?"

"Carambo! you are right," said the brigand; "you are a thoughtful traveller; but make haste, I like your dollars."

"Oh, don't imagine you are going to gain any more of them," returned Pepita, leaving the kitchen; and shortly after the report of fire-arms was heard.

"What is the matter now?" muttered Magnus O'More, hearing the report of the fire-arms. Just then the two female attendants entered the room, dragging a mattress after them, which they placed in a corner of the room, and then covered it with very doubtful coloured sheets, &c. The lieutenant eyed their proceedings with a very satisfied look, for he felt certain he should not be obliged to seek repose upon the bed they were preparing.

"What was the firing for?" demanded our hero.

"Your domestic, senor, discharging his gun."

"Ah! he's a careful lad," returned the lieutenant; and, a short time after, he descended into the kitchen. He had strapped on his casket, and thrown his huge mantle over his shoulders. On reaching the kitchen to his surprise, he beheld Pepita engaged with great animation in a game of dice with the very men who intended cutting his throat that night. He had won back his two dollars, and the brigand who was in his debt four others, was vociferating loudly against his luck. They all started as they beheld the tall form of the lieutenant enter the kitchen.

"Did you examine my horse's feet, Pepita?" enquired O'More, "he was very lame when we came in?"

"No, senor, I did not; it was so dusk I did not remark it."

"Well then, get me a light, for I must look at his shoes, and have them removed."

"Is there a smith here?" asked Pepita, turning to the landlady, who was dozing over a brazier of lighted charcoal.

"Yes, to be sure there is," returned the woman; "but you can't have him here to-night."

"Certainly not," said our hero, "the morning will do."

Pepita re-lighted the lantern, whispering to his antagonist at the dice, "You shall have your revenge when I come back."

"Hombre de Dios! you may rely on that," said the man, with a loud and significant laugh. His comrades heard the words, and all laughed boisterously. The lieutenant paid no attention, though he heard the words Pepe uttered, and the reply, but followed the valet into the yard.

It was, in truth, a wild and fearfully dark night,—strong gusts of wind howled round the house, and showers of sleet beat in their faces, as they crossed the space to the stable.

"It is a pleasant night," muttered O'More, as he bent his head to enter the stable door. Pepita held up the light, and he could see that both horses were saddled and bridled, and ready for mounting; but, just as Pepita had unhooked the

bridles, a gruff and fierce voice exclaimed from the door,—

"Diavolos! how is this? horses saddled at this time of the night—" and on the point of raising his voice in a loud shout, he felt his throat grasped in the strong clasp of O'More's hand. The man was a strong fellow, and struggled desperately to get his knife out; but O'More dragged him into the stable, and hurled him under the manger of an empty stall, and then, with horse ropes, bound him hand and foot. Our hero holding a cocked pistol to his head, saying, —"One shout, and you die."

"Curse your cunning; there's for you, then, if I die for it," and a wild shout rang through the stable.

Pepita lifted up a fork, to strike him with the handle.

"No, no," said the lieutenant, "fasten that girth across his mouth; the storm without drowned his noise."

Having, in no very tender manner, stopped the

brigand's cries with the girth, Pepita led the horses forth, having extinguished the lantern. The stables and out-houses opened out, as we said, upon the road. Mounting their horses, the sky opening a little after the fierce shower that had passed, they prepared to proceed,—they had to retrace their way and pass the door of the posada; but this gave very little trouble to Magnus O'More, who, with a pistol cocked in his right hand, spurred on his horse, telling Pepita to keep close.

As he uttered the words there was a loud shout from the front of the venta, and the flash of several pistols,—a ball whizzed unpleasantly close to Pepita's ears, wonderfully expediting his movements. The alarm was given by one of the girls missing our hero's things from the room, and finding two gold pieces on the table. On dashed the two fugitives,—and, like a meteor, they shot past the front of the posada; from the open windows and door rushed forth the brigands, uttering furious maledictions, and as they

galloped past, pistols and carbines were fired at them, but without effect. O'More turned in his saddle, and levelling his pistol at a group, plainly visible, from the light in their rear, fired, and down went one of the brigands. On spurred our hero and his faithful squire,—pop, pop, went the carbines of the furious and baffled villains, but the darkness of the night confused their aim, and not one shot told upon either man or horse.

"Blessed saints, senor," exclaimed Pepita, shouting at the top of his voice, "pull up, pull up, or we shall be over the precipice,—it's three hundred feet deep."

Magnus O'More stopped the headlong speed of his horse, for he could not distinguish a yard a-head; and the howling of the storm, and another squall of rain coming on, and the roughness of the road, rendered a slower pace necessary.

As Pepita coming up alongside the lieutenant said,—"Well, amigos, we have baffled those

villains famously; and, besides, I have left one of them with a remembrance."

"The saints be praised, senor, we escaped their shots. I never before had a leaden bullet so unpleasantly near my head,—it's an ugly sound; Carambo! it made me shiver."

"Ah! you're a brave fellow, for all that," said the lieutenant; "the whistle of a bullet close to the ear has made many a brave man start, when heard for the first time."

"Keep to the right, senor; Santiago! you will be over the precipice; and mind the descent, you may remember how steep it was to ascend,—another league, and we shall gain the plain."

With exceeding care and attention they began the descent. No kind of fence lined the road next the precipice, and huge pieces of rock, detached by the storm from the heights over one side of their road, strewed the path. In one of the pauses of the furious blasts that came roaring over the crags they thought they heard the shout of a human voice.

"Did you hear that, Pepita?" demanded the lieutenant; "it was certainly some one shouting."

"Hombre! senor; they may have crossed the ravine on foot, hoping to catch us at the bottom of this descent; you know the road forms a half-circle."

As the valet uttered the words, a shrill and peculiar whistle reached their ears, apparently considerably below them.

"There's no mistaking that whistle," said the lieutenant, "so look to your arms, Pepita; I have re-loaded my pistol."

"My carbine is too wet, senor; but I have my pistols dry."

"Now, if it is those villains," said our hero, "they will fire on us as we reach the level; so, put your horse to his mettle—never mind the descent, and, when you see the flash of their guns, fire into the rascals. You will only have to stand one discharge."

"Carambo!" muttered Pepita, "one discharge may settle my intended union with Inez;

but here goes," and setting spurs to his horse, he floundered over the rough road after his master, with headlong speed, imploring the protection of all the saints in the Spanish calendar, and condemning the soul of the pedlar, who he accused as the cause of their being at the posada of Los Dormagos, to a countless number of years in purgatory.

Their horses thundered over the rough road, striking sparks of fire from the flinty stones, just as they turned the angle, and reached the level, several bright flashes gleamed in the darkness to their left, — O'More's horse reared wildly, and then plunged madly on, but not before its rider had fired his two pistols at the spot where the flashes came from. He knew his horse was hit, but he hoped not severely. He heard Pepita following close behind him, and he could distinguish his voice as he bestowed his malediction on the enemy, but he did not hear him fire.

After half-an-hour of sharp riding, the lieutenant again pulled up. It was impossible

for the brigands to follow them further, they were a league behind.

"Well, Pepita, they have fired their last shot, and thank God we have escaped; but my horse is hit."

"The blessed Madonna be praised, senor, I had a lucky escape; a ball cut my bridle rein, and another went through my pistol holster I'm sure. When I reach San Lucar I will give a wax candle three feet long and six inches thick to be placed in the chapel of San Lucar, before the image of the blessed Madonna."

As the dawn made, the sky cleared to the west, and the sun rose, cheering them with its wintry beams. Magnus O'More alighted to examine his horse; he soon perceived that he was struck by a ball in the flank, which had made a gash; but the ball did not penetrate.

Pepita was right, besides cutting his reins, a ball had shattered the stock of one of the pistols in his holster.

"You had a narrow escape, Pepita," remarked

the lieutenant, after his attendant had washed the blood from his horse's flank.

"Carambo! senor, I'm not a coward, but this night shooting is not pleasant, especially when you are the game shot at. The rascals did their best, anyhow; but, Santiago, senor, what were we shot for? it was not to rob you, I'm sure."

"Well not exactly, Pepita; but the fact is, as your pretty Inez said, it's a mystery; now let us proceed, we shall have a long ride to get a breakfast, for I do not admire the baccalao and the venta we stopped at yesterday."

"Hombre!" muttered Pepe, as he mounted his horse after knotting his reins, "it's better to eat baccalao in peace, than roast fowl with the prospect of having to swallow a leaden pill, for digestion's sake, after it; and I shall have Inez pouting when I get back. But, Santiago, I think I'm safe, for we certainly did not sleep at Los Dormagos."

On reaching the venta where they had halted the preceding day, they perceived that it had be-

come the scene of indescribable confusion. Before the door was an immense clumsy lumbering calese, covered with mud and filth on one side, and three mules, half starved ones too, standing shivering beside it in the same condition. A dozen travellers, of both sexes and divers ages, were gathered about the vehicle, who were all vociferating and arguing with the utmost vehemence; and seemed to be venting their abuse upon two men, who were standing carelessly lolling their arms upon the muzzles of their carbines, and looking at the enraged travellers with the most stoical indifference—smoking at the same time their papaletts (paper cigars).

O'More guessed that the two men were guarda caminos, and that the enraged party were travellers, who had no doubt been upset and robbed; this on enquiry turned out to be the case. They immediately surrounded our hero, all telling the same story at the same time, They had hired the men to protect them, but the moment they

heard the words "Boca Abagos" they set spurs to their horses, the postillion upset the calese into a muddy ditch, and the brigands, after rolling them all in the mud, plundered them of every article of value they possessed, and all the time there were but two robbers.

"Regardez, monsieur," said a tall meagre Frenchman, addressing the amused lieutenant, and making hideous faces, "I have lost a gold watch and snuff box—parbleu! 'worth eight hundred francs—and all my money; and ce coquin la fled without firing a shot."

"How many robbers were there?" demanded our hero.

"How many?" repeated an Amazonian dame, pushing the Frenchman out of the way. "Why only two."

"So two men,' remarked the lieutenant, "and four men amongst you besides your valiant guardians, plundered you with impunity. Santiago! you were valiant."

"Do you call those creatures men?" said the

dame, indignantly; and this fellow," making a grimace at the Frenchman, "said, before we fell in with the robbers, that he himself was sufficient to protect us. Oh, mon Dieu! he tried to hide himself under my cloak, the poltroon."

"Que voulez vous, monsieur?" said the Frenchman humbly, and shrugging his shoulders, "how could I tell, with my mouth in the mud, how many robbers there were?"

"Carambo! what a set of cowards," interjected Pepe, contemptuously, thinking how valiantly he had acted. "Why did you run away, guardianos?"

"Carambo!" returned the man, coolly, "to procure assistance. When we came back, the villains had fled; Hombre! it was well for them."

Pepita burst out laughing.

Magnus had no fancy, hungry as he was, to stop at the venta, where there was not half enough baccalao to feed the enraged and plundered travellers; so merely refreshing their horses, they remounted. The little Frenchman, approaching

the lieutenant, humbly begged him to lend him a couple of dollars, which he would surely pay him the next time they met, wherever that might be.

"It may be in China," said O'More, laughing, and handing the Frenchman a couple of dollars.

"It's quite possible," returned the gratified little man, with a low bow. "Should his celestial majesty be troubled with corns, I'm a celebrated exterminator of those troublesome customers; at present I am employed, and have the honour to serve, General Junot, of the great revolutionary army."

Our hero returned the salute, gave the spurs to his horse, and left the great exterminator of corns secretly wishing he had begged the loan of a dozen dollars instead of two.

CHAPTER VIII.

Towards sunset the travellers came in sight of the sea-girt city of Cadiz. O'More had made up his mind to take Pepita with him to the posada of his fast friend, and send him back to San Lucar the next day, with letters to his grandmother and Donna Maria. He passed through the gates of the city without exciting any more attention than a passing glance, and riding slowly through the streets entered the courtyard of the posada without being noticed by any one.

The lieutenant felt pleased at the thought of seeing the pretty Juana once more, and of being able to present her with a marriage present; he also anticipated a good repast, and a clean com-

fortable chamber, two things not easily procured throughout the province of Andalusia, without the risk of sharing his couch with the lively punga and chinche so literally domesticated in the Andalusian posadas.

The hostess came hurrying out in great amazement and anxiety, when she heard Lieutenant O'More's voice, and embraced him with the greatest affection, asking a hundred questions at once.

"Oh, I will tell you all about it, mother," said Magnus, following her into his old chamber. "But how is Juana? where is she?"

The old lady smiled, saying,

"Ah, how vexed she will be; she never dreamt of seeing you again. She is gone to Seville with her father, to see his relations before her marriage with Juan."

O'More looked vexed; he then enquired if Admiral O'Brien was still in harbour.

"Oh dear, yes, my child," said the worthy woman, "he cannot get out, your fleet is block-

ing the harbour, and they say—but God forbid! —that they will bombard the town. The great Spanish fleet, under Masseredo, is in harbour also."

"You must contrive, my good friend, to get a letter to O'Brien," said the lieutenant.

"Oh! no occasion in the world, he will be here this evening, bringing with him two or three other officers, and I will speak to him, and tell him you are here; he will be so glad to see you again; he told me he saw you at the duke's. Now, my dear child, tell us all about what happened at your grandfather's, at San Lucar."

Our hero complied.

As Magnus finished his story, omitting entirely the events of the preceding night, as he had arranged with Pepita so to do, leaving his listener to suppose he came from San Lucar direct, she said, "well, God, I hope, will soften his heart; he had always a hard one, but the duchess was always the kindest creature in the world. It must have made her so happy to em-

brace you,—the only child of her beautiful Fernanda. But the mercy and wisdom of God is very manifest, my dear child; you see how the Duke was punished for giving way to his unnatural desire of vengeance."

"True, mother, true; when I was blaming fortune, and grumbling at my unjust seizure on a charge of murder, the ardent desire of my heart for years was brought about by the very mishap I was accusing fortune of inflicting on me."

"And how do you intend getting out of this blockaded city, and to leave the country?"

"It will be easy for my friend O'Brien to send me out in a boat, with a flag of truce, to any of the blockading squadron. I shall then regain my own ship, which, I dare say, is amongst those forming the blockade."

"Ah! my dear child, I wish this horrid war was over; I greatly fear that the French will gain the day in this country, if Spain keep making war with the English."

"We shall drive them out of Spain by-and-bye,"

said Magnus. "The Spaniards will get tired of their French allies, depend on it. Let me have some paper and pens, that I may write to my grandmother, and Donna Maria de Cabra."

"Eh, Madonna! and have you seen the beautiful daughter of the duke—you did not say so—is she not lovely? If she was half as good as she is beautiful she'd be an angel."

"And is she not good? In truth, I never saw a face more fascinating," said Magnus, seriously.

"Well, when I say half as good, I do not know that she is bad, or vicious, but she is proud and ambitious, and, they say, revengeful, like her father. She has had many lovers, though only twenty years of age."

"Twenty!" repeated Magnus, surprised, "she does not look eighteen; how can she be twenty; I am only one and twenty, and the Duke was to have married my dear mother."

"That is true," said Dame Torredos; "nevertheless Donna Maria is twenty; the duke, her father, married two months after the flight of

Donna Fernanda with your father. He married from pride, and to shew the world he did not care for the loss of his intended bride. They say at Seville that Donna Maria hoped to marry one of the royal family, and that the king was displeased with the duke, her father, for setting his daughter to fascinate the prince. However, Donna Maria was forced to leave the court, and a young cavalero, of high family, but poor, and to whom they say she gave great encouragement, shot himself for love of her."

Magnus O'More became thoughtful, and the hostess left him to write his letters, whilst she prepared his supper. He took up his pen and wrote to Donna Maria just as his heart prompted him; he did not write one word of love, but he spoke of gratitude, and warmly expressed his sense of her interest in his safety. This done he resolved to banish Donna Maria from his mind altogether, as far as love was concerned, for though fascinated by her beauty and grace whilst in her presence, his heart, after all, was but slightly

touched. A long letter to his grandmother followed; even to her he refrained from speaking of the attempt upon his life, not wishing to compromise Donna Maria with her father, and he felt satisfied that Pepita, for his own interest, would also keep silence upon the events of the night. In the evening he was joined by the delighted and surprised O'Brien.

"Why, where on earth, Magnus, my boy, do you come from?" exclaimed O'Brien, after a most cordial greeting. "Here we are, shut up like chickens in a coop; by the Lord Harry, it is refreshing to see you."

"I assure you, O'Brien, it is equally delightful to see you; the only regret I ever have when I do see you is, that we draw swords on opposite sides. But let us sup, and then for a long chat."

Mrs. Mary Torredos was determined the two friends should sup, and that after a fashion not often seen in Spain; and they had also her very best wine, choice Xeres, from the bodegas of that

celebrated place. After supper, the two friends had a long chat over their wine; Magnus gave O'Brien a full account of every occurrence, he omitted nothing to the friend of his early boyhood, to whom he owed everything.

There was a smile on the commodore's lips when Donna Maria came upon the *tapis*, for our hero felt that in confiding her part in the late affair, it was as safe as if confined in his own breast.

"I tell you what, Magnus," said the admiral, as our hero finished his adventure, "the moment you get back to 'ould Ireland,' and get possession of your own, pick up a nice, quiet, sweet-tempered Irish lass—pick a daisy off your own soil, if you can, they make capital wives; never mind these Donna Marias, with their fine ankles and feet, that would not crush a grass-hopper, and with eyes, — my conscience! they go through you like a flash of electricity, they would keep you in a perpetual fever. No, no, let these Spanish donnas alone; I knew deuced well there

was a petticoat loose about the old duke's house, and all I can tell you is, you were within a point of the compass of being fairly brought up in the wind's eye; you were shivering; another spoke of the helm, and Donna Maria had you in irons. You must get married; you will be in a perpetual scrape, if you don't. Why, there's that poor devil Juan,—he drove me and Captain Renaud to Chicalana a few days ago; I asked him when he was going to get spliced to pretty Juana. Juan looked sulky, for they had had a quarrel in the morning. 'Carambo! Capitanos!' said the lad, 'she cares more about the lieutenant's little finger than my whole body—it is too bad, Santos Dios, it is too bad!' "

Magnus laughed, saying, "I assure you there never was a kinder hearted girl than Juana. Juan, like all Spanish lovers, is too selfish. I must, however, leave the pretty Juana a wedding present. Now, tell me, O'Brien, without infringing upon the articles of war, what ships are outside?"

"There's your own saucy Terpsichore for one;

she was close in yesterday, pelting some of our gun-boats. But there is, first of all, Earl St. Vincent, in the Ville-de-Paris, a hundred and ten guns; Sir Horatio Nelson commands the in-shore squadron; then there's the Diadem, the Prince George, the Emerald, and a lot of others, besides the Thunderer, Terror, and Stromboli, bomb vessels. I dare say we shall have a scratch some of these days, when we get the dons in humour."

"Well, now, will you get me out to-morrow; I long to get on board my old ship?"

"Ah! an exchange from the petticoats, and, upon my conscience, I can't say but that there's less risk aboard your ship. I'll send you out to-morrow in my cutter, with a flag of truce; any of the ships will do, you can easily join your own craft afterwards."

"How foolish it was not to think of coming here at once," said our hero, "instead of attempting a jouney overland to Gibraltar; I should have probably missed my own ship."

"Only for a day or two," said O'Brien, "for

the despatch boats are plying daily between the rock and the fleet. By-the-bye," continued the admiral, "your little Terpsichore behaved very gallantly the other day."

"Ah! let Captain Bowen have but an opportunity," said Magnus, eagerly. "But what happened?"

"Why, it seems that the Terpsichore fell in with the Santissima Trinidad, four decker; this fine ship had been crippled in the action off Cape St. Vincent, and was trying to make the coast, being driven off by a gale. The Terpsichore got sight of her, and had the extraordinary audacity (so the captain of the four-decker called it, but I call it the astonishing gallantry) to open fire upon the huge Spaniard. So admirably was the Terpsichore managed, that her monster of an antagonist could only bring her chasers to bear upon her. The saucy frigate kept up her fire till midnight, and then followed her, hoping to find a consort to join her, to pepper the Colossus, but part of Admiral Cordova's squadron coming in

sight, the Terpsichore made sail and got off. The four-decker is in here now; she had nine of her crew killed and several wounded by the fire of your frigate. The officers of the Santissima Trinidad are in a precious rage, I can tell you."

"That is so like my gallant commander," exclaimed Magnus. "How I should like to have been on board!"

"In love and war, the same eagerness," said O'Brien, with a merry laugh.

The evening passed delightfully to the two companies, and not till a very late hour did the generous and gallant O'Brien leave his young friend. Magnus was to be on the east mole by twelve o'clock on the morrow.

The first thing our hero did on the following morning was to despatch Pepita to San Lucar with the horses and the letters; that for Donna Maria he was to give to Inez. Pepita was handsomely rewarded; nevertheless, he parted with extreme regret from the cheerful and high-spirited sailor, promising to carefully fulfil all

his instructions. From the jewel case Magnus selected a very handsome brooch, which he begged his kind hostess Torredos to give Juana, with his remembrances, as a wedding gift.

"Dear, goodness!" said the worthy landlady, "what will Juana do with so costly a jewel as this?"

"Keep it," returned Magnus, "to remind her of one who is grateful to her for kindness at a time when his life might have been in danger."

A handsome donation was also left for Juan, and Magnus took leave of his mother's former attendant with much emotion; the attached woman shed tears as she embraced him, and prayed that the future might repay him for the past, and that when the war should cease, she might yet see him return to be reconciled to his grandfather.

Throwing his mantle over his shoulder, and holding his precious casket under his arm, Magnus left the posada, a young lad going on before to show him the road to the mole.

As he pursued his way through the crowded

streets, he had time to look about him; hitherto he had seen little of Cadiz except its prison—not a very agreeable place to remember or visit. It was a strange scene the streets of Cadiz presented; droves of mules, with their little tinkling bells, pushed their way through the busy talking crowd; then would come one of those strange antique ox carts grinding along; numbers of nun-like figures passed him by, with the black drapery over their heads; but as our hero caught the glance of their dark lustrous eyes he was satisfied they were no nuns. Those Spanish dames exercised a strange fascination, though they were attired in so sombre a way. In one hand was carried the everlasting fan, the other held the drapery, concealing when they pleased all but the dark dangerous eye; as O'Brien said, its glance acting like electricity.

Magnus was gazing after a very graceful figure, the tight dress setting it off to great advantage, when his arm was grasped; he turned round and beheld O'Brien.

"By Jupiter! it's well I was on the look out for you; is that the flag you were looking for? Oh, by St. Peter! I thought I would have to take you in tow, or the deuce a bit would twelve o'clock find you at the mole head."

Magnus laughingly shook his friend's hand, saying,

"Do you ever go to confession, O'Brien?"

"Faith! in war you see, Magnus, we have no time; besides, upon my conscience, the daughters of Cadiz have a wondrous grace in their step and movements."

"Do you say that, when you write to your pretty wife?"

"Honour bright! I merely look on them with the eye of an artist."

In five minutes the two friends stood upon the Mole. The wide bay, with its forest of masts, was before them; the stately three deckers, the graceful frigates, the ponderous and imposing two-deckers, and the hundred of small craft that plied oar and sail, in and out from the numerous

fleet of war vessels that lined the inner and outward harbour. Beyond, the expansive ocean was glittering in the unclouded sun, whilst the long line of noble ships, forming the blockade of Cadiz, were visible in the distance. It was a very lovely and exciting scene.

Lying off the landing-place was Admiral O'Brien's cutter, with a midshipman and six seamen resting on their oars. The two friends stood for a moment somewhat thoughtful. The one, a young lieutenant, the other a very young admiral, indeed; but the strange eventful times made the man, and his gallantry and services, though only thirty, gave him rank. It was far from a singular case, for there were men in the republican armies, generals, younger than O'Brien; in the naval service of France, at that time, very young men, not even bred to the sea, who commanded her ships.

"Well, we must part once more, Magnus, my boy," said O'Brien, holding his young friend's hand, and looking affectionately into his thought-

ful features. "We meet and part in strange eventful times; who can say when and where we shall see each other again?"

"True, dear friend; still I trust we shall meet, and in happier and more peaceful times."

"God send!" and they pressed each other's hands with a true friendly clasp.

"You will stand right out," said O'Brien, as our hero stepped on board the cutter; "you can then hoist a flag of truce, and make for the nearest ship of the in-shore squadron," and waving his hat, which salutation our hero returned, the boat dashed through the water, the sails were then hoisted and the sheets slacked; and the cutter made rapid way into the still blue waters of the Bay of Cadiz.

The young midshipman steering the cutter looked earnestly into the features of Lieutenant O'More, who being very abstracted in his own thoughts, was exceedingly serious, till looking up he caught the young lad's gaze fixed enquiringly upon him; with a smile our hero said,

"Have you and I ever met before, young gentleman? somehow I think we have, and that not very long ago."

"You are right, monsieur," returned the young middy, "you were the officer who boarded the Vestale in a boat from the Terpsichore, and took possession of her; and afterwards was so disgracefully treated."

"Ah! my brave lad, I recollect you now, you were the only officer of the Vestale crew who offered us common civility, and lent us a hand, when your own lives were at stake, as well as ours."

"It was a sad scene, monsieur," observed the midshipman. "The men were, as you know, brutally intoxicated, and our chief officers made no effort to check them. The fact is, monsieur, we all felt so confident of taking the Terpsichore that the defeat we experienced rendered our officers and the men furious; but their dastardly conduct in throwing you overboard can in no way be excused. Neither can the refusing to sur-

render the Vestale be defended; but how, monsieur, did you escape?"

O'More briefly explained, and then said,

"How is it that you are with Admiral O'Brien?"

"I served two years under the admiral," returned the middy, "when he was captain of the Marseillais, frigate. The Vestale is repairing, and seeing me one day on the quay he recognised me, and to my great joy at once took me on board his own ship."

"It is a disgrace to the French navy,—their keeping possession of the Vestale. Not only was she a surrendered ship, but she was actually saved from foundering by the prize crew put on board her."

"So, monsieur, all the French officers in Cadiz allowed; but the first lieutenant said he dared not act otherwise, when once the Vestale reached Cadiz. The Directory, he said, would take his head."

They had cleared the bay, and were standing

out towards the in-shore squadron. O'More gazed earnestly at the wooden bulwarks of old England. Numbers of cutters, and schooners, and latteen-rigged craft were plying between the great ships; also sundry despatch boats from Lisbon and Gibraltar. As they approached the ships with their flag of truce flying above the Spanish colours, they were observed by a fine showy looking cutter, which immediately altered her course, and stood for them.

"You had better lower your sails," said the British officer to the midshipman. "I will get on board this cutter."

This was done, and in a few minutes the cutter shot up into the wind alongside, and our hero, shaking the young midshipman kindly by the hand, sprung on the deck of the Fox cutter. He knew her commander, Captain Gibson, very well.

"You are fortunate, Lieutenant O'More," said the skipper, shaking the lieutenant's hand, "to get off so well. By Jove! your commander was

very vexed and sore at the scurvy way you were treated; and so those fellows of the Vestale refuse to give her up?"

"By Jove they do," returned our hero, "it's a rascally shame, and a disgrace to their flag; but where is the old Terpsichore?"

"There,—away to the south-east; you can see her making a stretch in-shore. I will put you on her deck in no time. I know your presence will be welcome to all."

"Faith! not more than I shall be to see them."

"But how on earth did you contrive to get free, and sent out in an admiral's cutter?"

O'More very briefly explained that Admiral O'Brien was a very old and dear friend. On approaching the Terpsichore the Fox hoisted a signal, and the frigate at once backed her topsails. Our hero was received on board the Terpsichore, by officers and crew, in a manner truly gratifying to him. Captain Bowen evinced sincere pleasure at his return, and all the officers

joined in giving him a hearty welcome. Phelim McFarlane was in ecstasies, and took the hand held out to him with a grasp that betrayed the feelings he experienced.

"I cannot tell you, Magnus," said the first lieutenant, when they were alone in their private cabin that evening, "how truly happy your return makes me. I know our commander is anxious to hear all the particulars, and will expect a recital to-morrow; but I am doubly so, for there is a kind of mystery about this affair altogether. We have done nothing but talk about you ever since you left us; and were obliged to have a watch set upon your favourite, McFarlane. By Jove! I do believe he would have swam ashore if he could, to gain some news about you."

"Phelim is to me as a brother," said O'More; "from my earliest years he has followed my fortunes, and to him, as you know, I owe life and station. Please God, the time will come when I may be able to show my gratitude. Now,

George, I will tell you a strange piece of intelligence. Unfortunate and untoward as was the affair of the Vestale, the pitching me overboard like a log of wood, has actually led to my finding out my mother's relations, and the recovery of all the papers and proofs relating to the legitimacy of my birth."

George Templeton looked amazed; but our hero put him at once in possession of all his adventures after landing on Spanish soil.

"My dear O'More," said the first lieutenant, "you were born under a fortunate star; but, believe me, no one can rejoice more than I do at your great good fortune. I am quite aware your chief aim was neither wealth nor aggrandizement."

"No," answered O'More; "to clear my beloved mother's name from shame, and my noble father's from reproach, has been the aim of my life; and that aim would never have been attained by any endeavours of mine, had not

Providence aided and assisted my wishes when least expected."

The friends remained conversing till a late hour; and the next day O'More had a friendly and kind invitation from Captain Bowen, who heard his recital, and his unexpected success in gaining such valuable papers and documents, with sincere pleasure. Conversation then turned upon the then state of affairs, and the prospects of the war.

"We are to bombard Cadiz," said Captain Bowen; "that will, perhaps, induce the French and Spanish fleets to come out."

"I fear not," said O'More; "for I heard it said in Cadiz that, in case of a bombardment, the ships of war can be all warped out of shot."

"You have not heard, O'More," remarked Lieutenant Templeton, "of the mutiny at Spithead. It has been a sad affair."

Our hero listened to the account brought out by a fast-sailing cutter, with surprise and grief.

"I am sorry to say," observed Captain Bowen, "that the same spirit has shown itself in some of the ships out here. In fact, to divert their attention, the Admiral has resolved to bombard Cadiz; though, in my opinion, very little good will result from it."

We shall pass over the bombardment of Cadiz, as it led to no other consequence than the loss of life on both sides. Shortly after this, Earl St. Vincent heard that a richly-freighted Manilla ship had arrived at Santa Cruz. An attack upon the town and shipping was determined upon,—at all events, the Spanish galleon must be cut out.

CHAPTER IX.

On the fifteenth of July, the squadron intended for this expedition sailed, under the orders of Rear Admiral Nelson. The Terpsichore, and their old attendant, the Fox cutter, were amongst the squadron, which consisted of three seventy-four-gun ships and four frigates. With a fine breeze the vessels bore away for their destination,—the officers and men in high spirits. What a blessed ignorance is that will of Providence, which ordains us to be blind with respect to the future.

Magnus O'More was delighted—such an expedition had an air of romance in it; the hopes also of cutting out a galleon, laden with dollars and specie, had a wonderful charm, in the very

prospect, to the officers and crew. The Theseus, seventy-four, carried the flag of Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, then advancing rapidly in his glorious career; Trowbridge, the gallant captain, and winner of many a fight, commanded the Culloden; Samuel Flood the Leander; all gallant names, and all dear to every British tar.

The morning of the fifth day the lofty Peak of Teneriffe was seen rising above the ocean, and towering to the skies. Not a speck of cloud dimmed the glorious view,—the rippling sea spread out like a blaze of sunshine,—so serene and lovely was the scene, that the island appeared as if reposing on the bosom of a placid lake, and not the wide-spread, vast Atlantic.

On arriving off the island, the captains of the different ships assembled on board one of the vessels, leaving the officers and men in great anxiety as to the results of the conference.

"It's a remarkably strong place, O'More," said his friend, the first lieutenant, after a survey

of the forts and batteries of Santa Cruz. "I'm thinking that many a mess will miss a member before we reduce this place. You know, my dear Magnus, that I am not a very dreamy or imaginative kind of person, still, strange enough, these three or four nights back I have been oppressed with wondrous dreams. I know that there is nothing in these phantasmagorias of our nightly thoughts beyond the singularity of one's ideas running into such wild and unthought of forms; and yet, upon my honour, I know not how it is, but they have made an impression upon me this time."

Magnus was young, and very reckless of life in all enterprises; but, nevertheless, he was not a person inclined to laugh away, or make little of a friend's feelings, or his presentiments

"Dreams are strange things, dear friend," he replied, "and we all have singular ones at times; and I perfectly agree with you that, despite our boasted reason, they do affect our minds; but then, I think, that greatly depends on circum-

stances,—what would depress us at one time would scarcely be heeded another; our feelings are generally the result of our bodily vigour and health. You have been low ever since that attack of fever."

"Yes, Magnus, it clings a little to me still, and I must throw it off by action. But attend to what I say to you now, for you appear to me to bear a charmed life. You see this chain round my neck?"

"I do," said the lieutenant.

"Well then, if I fall in this strife, and we are together, take off this chain and the miniature that is attached to it; and, if God spares you, keep it, till you can deliver it to her —you know whom I mean, Magnus," and the speaker pressed his friend's hand.

"Yes; your request, if you fall and I am spared, shall be sacred, Templeton; but, please God, you will live to reap the reward of your faithfulness."

"No, Magnus, no," said Lieutenant Templeton,

seriously but calmly. "There," and he pointed to the Mole of Santa Cruz, "there I shall strike my last blow; I have seen the spot as plainly as I now see you; but no more of this, here is Captain Bowen's gig."

The commander of the Terpsichore on coming on board proceeded to the cabin, and then sent to request the presence of his officers. Captain Bowen, one of the most enterprising officers afloat, was in high spirits, for he delighted in an enterprise of the kind contemplated by the admiral. When his officers were assembled, Captain Bowen said:

"The attack is to be made to-morrow night upon the town and forts. Each of the seventy-fours furnish two hundred seamen and marines; the frigates half that number. There, also, will be a small detachment of Royal Artillery; altogether we shall not be far short of eleven hundred men. Each captain commands the seamen from his own ship; but all will be under the orders of Captain Trowbridge. Now the worst of

it is," continued the commander of the Terpsichore, "that the garrisons, and the forts, and the town are alarmed. The Fox captured a large provision boat, and the crew on board declare that the forts are very strongly garrisoned, and that there is a very large force on the island. However, we must manage to carry the fort at the north-east side of the bay. This fort is within gun-shot of the town, and will, if gained, be most important. Mr. Templeton, I leave it to you and Mr. O'More to select the number of men required, and to do so creating as little jealousy amongst the crew as possible."

This the first lieutenant promised to do, and after an hour passed in consultation, the officers retired. Before evening the first lieutenant appeared to have recovered his usual cheerful temper, and to have shaken off the depression he laboured under. As the two friends sat together in the evening, Magnus, who was rejoiced to see the first lieutenant in such good spirits, said,

"I feel satisfied that your depression arose from the effects of fever."

"I think so myself, Magnus," returned the lieutenant. "Still my dreams were extremely strange, and as you figure amongst the phantoms of my brain I will tell them to you. Three days before coming in sight of Teneriffe, the depression caused by the fever, and which the bombardment of Cadiz roused me from, returned. On retiring to rest that night, I awoke an hour afterwards in a profuse perspiration. Some time after I dozed, and then I dreamed I was standing on a long projecting wall or mole, with the sea beating wildly against its base; I had my sword in my hand, and was waving it to some object out at sea. This part of my dream was indistinct; but as I turned I beheld a high and strong battery, and over this battery I saw plainly enough the Spanish flag. I gave a cheer, and rushing toward the battery fell over a dead body. I turned the face up, and then with a

wild cry I awoke, streaming with perspiration. The face of the dead was distinctly visible—the features were those of our gallant commander. I lay awake the rest of the night, for the dream made a great impression on me. You remarked in the morning, Magnus, that I did not appear well, but imputed it to the effect of the fever. The next night I was on the same mole; but this time I was surrounded by a crowd of excited seamen, all eager to rush upon the same battery, on which the Spanish flag was still flying in defiance. Suddenly a blaze of fire flashed over its walls, and the mole was swept by an iron shower; the men fell around me struck dead by this shower of grape, at the same moment I experienced a fearful pain; and felt in my sleep as if fainting. I heard a voice shout out, 'Who will lead us now?' and then I beheld you, Magnus, start up before me waving your sword, and shouting out, 'Forward, my lads; death or a glorious victory!' With a violent shudder I awoke, and again this time I was as if I had taken a bath,

so profuse was the perspiration I was in. For hours after I felt the pain in my side. Such were my dreams, my dear Magnus. Confess, at least, that they were singular."

"Still," observed O'More, "I consider these dreams to be nothing more than your imagination, running wild upon the scenes and events likely to occur; the great perspirations you fell into naturally weakened and depressed you; they no doubt were the effects of that treacherous fever, many of the men still suffer from it, and are very weak."

"Yes, I have perceived that. With respect to this intended expedition against Santa Cruz, I cannot divest my mind of the idea that it will be a failure."

During the night of the nineteenth there was a great change in the weather; the sky became overcast, and a strong breeze sprung up, which soon sent a heavy swell in upon the island—before morning it was nearly a gale. Nevertheless, the three frigates accompanied by the Fox cutter

and most of the boats of the squadron, at night-fall stood in. The next day it was determined that an attack should be made on the heights and the fort, and then from that commanding position the seamen and marines should storm and carry the fort itself. But even this turned out unfortunate, for the frigates were forced to re-embark their men without doing anything; the heights were too strongly guarded to be attempted.

Magnus O'More returned to the Terpsichore, chafed and disappointed; Lieutenant Templeton was walking the deck, he did not land that night with the men.

"I fear this will be a doomed expedition altogether," said O'More; "everything turns out unfortunate. Had the seventy-fours been able to come up to take the fort we might have attempted the heights; but the calms and currents have kept them off. Still I should like to have made a dash at them, but was overruled; the men feel disappointed."

"It would have been rash," said Lieutenant Templeton. "Depend on it Trowbridge will lead you on when the time comes; they are now prepared for us, and their force is treble, aye, five times greater than ours, backed by stone walls."

The next day, at five p.m., the squadron anchored to the north-east of the town; the line of battle ships nearly eight miles off, the frigates within two. As the bells struck the eleventh hour of the night seven hundred seamen and marines embarked in the boats of the squadron, one hundred and eighty more in the Fox cutter, and nearly as many in the captured provision boat. The whole force was commanded by the rear admiral in person.

The Fox cutter, accompanied by Admiral Nelson's boat, and several others, pulled in for the shore. In one of the boats was Captain Bowen, his two lieutenants, and thirty-six men.

They had all reached to within half gun shot of the mole head, when the alarm bells ashore struck up an incessant peal; the wind was blow-

ing fresh, and the sea exceedingly rough, besides the darkness was great.

Immediately the bells rang, thirty or more guns from the battery opened fire. Two shots raked the Fox cutter, and then a fatal one struck her between wind and water, when she immediately sunk with all on board.

"Good God!" exclaimed Magnus, "the Fox is going down."

The men turned the boat's head towards the doomed ship, and so did two other of the boats; the admiral's was one. Captain Bowen's boat was close beside Admiral Nelson's, when a shot struck the rear admiral on the elbow, when he fell back totally disabled, and his boat immediately turned back with him to his ship; but very few were picked up from the Fox, ninety-seven of the brave fellows with their commander perished.

"Now, my lads," exclaimed Captain Bowen, standing up, "give way for the mole."

Magnus O'More, during his exertions in saving the few men from the Fox cutter, had got, with ten or sixteen men of the Terpsichore, into another boat. They had just come up with Captain Bowen's boat, when a shot struck her, and sunk her within some twenty yards of the mole. The other boats following picked up the men of Captain Bowen's boat, our hero assisting his commander in, whilst Lieutenant Templeton got ashore by swimming.

Amidst this scene of confusion and death, the fire of six twenty-four pounders and above three hundred men on the mole, was poured upon them incessantly. But the men having landed from the boats, half swamped as they were, rallied and fell in under their respective commanders. With a cheer they dashed at the Spaniards on the mole head; Magnus, followed by some forty or fifty men of the Terpsichore, first gained the top of the mole, making a fierce rush at the guns, and then a furious conflict took place; but Captain Bowen, and Lieutenant Templeton, and Captain

Fremantle came rushing up with their men, and the Spaniards fled.

"Spike the guns O'More, spike the guns," cried out Captain Bowen, and he and Lieutenant Templeton then rushed on.

Collecting the men, Lieutenant O'More had the guns spiked. Phelim McFarlane was close beside him, and as he turned to follow his commander Phelim dragged him down behind the guns; as he did so a tremendous fire of grape and musketry came tearing along the mole, strewing the ground with dead and wounded. Our hero sprang up, and waving his sword said,

"On, my lads, on; a glorious death, or victory!"

On they rushed, and again the iron shower scattered the men, and covered the place with dead. But still on rushed O'More and Phelim, with about a dozen others, till they were stopped by a heap of slain. Upon the summit of this wall of dead, without his hat, his sword still grasped in his hand, his face turned toward the gloomy sky

above, lay the gallant Richard Bowen ; he was dead, and beside him lay the first lieutenant, his hand in his breast, grasping the portrait of her he had loved so well.

"My God," cried O'More, gazing bewildered upon the bodies before him.

But again the thunder of the artillery from the citadel and musketry from the houses nearest the mole was heard, and a storm of balls swept over the living and the dead. The lieutenant started up ; he had he perceived scarcely ten men left alive ; the entire length of the mole was covered with the dead and the dying ; for one instant he stood bewildered, looking towards the citadel, his blood boiling, for over that citadel the Spanish flag waved proudly in the strong night wind. The disheartened and miserable remnant of brave hearts moved slowly down towards the beach, when O'More was roused by a voice saying,

"Come, sir, in the name of heaven do not stand here to be slain. Go forward you know we cannot."

"My faithful friend, Phelim," interrupted our hero; "thank God, you are spared,—I will come," and stooping, with a sigh of bitter sorrow and regret, he took the case from the dead lieutenant's breast. As he did so, the roar of the battery guns again broke the stillness of night, and the iron hail tore along the mole, and left not one man standing unhurt, save Magnus O'More and his follower; then came a cheer from the battery, and numbers of men sallied forth, to complete the work of death.

"This way, sir,—this way," exclaimed Phelim, seizing the lieutenant by the arm, "why stay to be slaughtered like sheep;" and they both leaped down from the wall, and lay still in its deep shadow, whilst some fifty or sixty Spanish soldiers rushed along the mole, thinking, no doubt, to capture all that remained alive before they could reach their boats; but, alas! none remained alive save Lieutenant O'More and Phelim, and them they passed.

Shaking off the deep despondency he felt at the

fate of his commander and friend, Magnus O'More thought it very possible that he and Phelim might cross the point, and get to the side where the other boats had landed their crews. The night was exceedingly dark, and the first part of the ascent over the rocks difficult and dangerous; but, both being strong, active men, they surmounted the rocks without being perceived, and then clambered over the rough ground till they gained a kind of slope leading down to the rocks skirting the sea; they could hear repeated discharges of musketry in the distance, which convinced them that their friends were still contending with a party of the enemy, and not very far off, and if they could only surmount the difficulties of the road they were on they might succeed in joining them.

They were then traversing a piece of ground apparently covered with cinders,—they could hear the surf thundering upon the ridges of rocks many feet beneath them; they had lost sight of the lights, when suddenly Lieutenant O'More stumbled into a hole, or rather the ashes he was walking on

gave way. Phelim rushed up to help his master,—the next moment the ground appeared to give way beneath their feet, when they both fell into a pit, a depth of fifteen or more feet; and before they could attempt to check their career, or grasp any object, the ground again gave way, and, amidst a vast quantity of ashes, cinders, and stones, they were hurled, though not violently, down a descent of over a hundred feet, and for several moments lay stunned, bruised, and nearly suffocated with a fine, ashy substance.

"The Lord save us! Speak to me, sir, if you're not kilt entirely. Heaven save us! where are we?" cried Phelim.

"In the crater of an extinct volcano," returned O'More, striving to free himself from the mass of ashes and cinders that nearly buried him. He felt sorely bruised, but thanked God no bones were broken. "I trust you have no limb broken, Phelim?"

"Thanks to the blessed saints, I don't feel any;

but I'm all of a jelly. The Lord save us! how shall we ever get out?"

"Certainly not the way we came in," said our hero, groping for Phelim; "let us move a little way from the mouth of this pit, for fear any more of the sides should give way."

Having found one another, they carefully groped their way over a great heap of rubbish,—a very faint gleam of light was seen above their heads; and, stretching out their arms to their fullest extent, they could not touch the sides of the pit.

"This is a strange place we have fallen into, Phelim," said our hero. "I do not think it's a mine; I know that the island has had many shocks of earthquake, and I believe eruptions have taken place in various parts."

"But how shall we get out, sir? I would rather be blown to rags than die here slowly of hunger and thirst. Blessed saints! the thought of it makes me sick."

"Never despair, my poor fellow,—the same Almighty Providence that spared our lives, when all our brave comrades perished, will equaliy save us from the death you fear. Thank God! we have our lungs uninjured; we can shout, and it's possible we may be heard,—we shall be made prisoners by the Spaniards, better that alternative, at all events."

"It has been a miserable affair, sir," said Phelim; "our brave commander slain, our first lieutenant and all our party, and the captain of the Fox,—Lord save us! what a lot of brave lives thrown away!"

"Too true, Phelim, too true; but such are the chances of war. Look at it as you will, it's a cruel and wicked way of settling the disputes and differences of kings."

Though sorely bruised, and with many cuts on legs and arms, these two stout-hearted men remained stretched upon the mass of ashes, cinders, and rubbish, till a faint gleam of daylight entered from the extremely small aperture through

which they were precipitated. After a time they grew more accustomed to the dim obscurity around, and then they anxiously examined the descent, down which they had travelled so unexpectedly.

It was very evident that it was utterly impossible to ascend the pit,—the sides crumbled away at the slightest touch, and brought down a shower of stones; even their voices, as they shouted, thinking some one might be passing that way, disturbed a fine pulverized sort of ashes, that descended in a cloud.

As the day wore on, Lieutenant O'More could not but acknowledge that their situation was very alarming,—they had neither eaten nor drank since they left the ships the previous day, and already they felt the want of water. They had undergone great fatigue,—both were soaked with wet when they landed, having been in the water when saving Captain Bowen, when his boat was sunk by a round shot. Several of the cuts had bled freely; and Lieutenant O'More felt his hair

clotted together, from a severe blow from a stone.

A long and terribly weary day passed, — they were hoarse with shouting, and parched with thirst. Magnus O'More's thoughts were busy. One circumstance afforded great relief to his mind, and that was his having sent his casket of papers and jewels to England, confided to the care of the third lieutenant of the Terpsichore, who returned to England in the Diadem, invalided, just before the expedition sailed for Santa Cruz. The casket was to be delivered into the custody of his old friend and protector, Captain Broomly. Going on such an expedition as the unfortunate one to Santa Cruz, he thought it better thus to dispose of his treasure than to carry it with him.

As the daylight faded away the two unfortunate prisoners were left in profound darkness, it was a wild, stormy, cloudy night, and by this time hunger and thirst began to be severely felt. Several times Phelim McFarlane made vigorous attempts to scale the side, but in vain; in fact,

this rendered their position worse, if possible, for every stone gave way to the touch, and brought down with it a heap of fine ashes and rubbish.

"It's a bad job, sir," said Phelim to our hero, as the night closed in; "we have,—the Lord be good to us! tumbled into our coffins."

"I thought it possible," remarked O'More, "that when not found amongst the dead, some search or enquiry might have ensued; but who can say how this unfortunate expedition has terminated,—perhaps the whole force may be either annihilated or prisoners of war; at all events, our ships have not attacked the place, or we should have heard the guns. I have a great mind to push through that narrow fissure that stops our way,—it's quite possible there may be subterranean caverns here, and some other outlet; it's no harm trying, at all events."

"Be dad, sir; I wonder we did not think of doing so before," cried Phelim; and, groping to the further end of the pit, they felt a very narrow fissure, about ten feet high and one broad, in the

side of the pit. By using two large stones, they widened the opening sufficiently to pass through, the obstacle being merely loose small stones, cinders, and ashes. Groping their way through, they found that they were in a very large cavern, indeed,—for, with their extended arms, they could neither touch the top or sides, the ground under their feet being cinders and ashes, but quite level. Carefully proceeding, for fear of falling into a pit or deep hole, they discovered that the sides of the cavern, after advancing about sixty or eighty yards, were formed of rocks; the height they could not judge, but the width exceeded five yards. Many masses of rock lay in their path; but, altogether, they went on easily.

"It is quite possible, Phelim," said our hero, "that we may get out; it's very likely this range of caverns may have an outlet on the sea shore,—you see we are descending, though not rapidly."

The cavern at this point took a sudden bend to the right, and became contracted in width; but,

as yet, they could not touch the roof. As they turned an angle of rock, nearly blocking the cavern across, Lieutenant O'More suddenly observed a gleam of light, which, for an instant, flashed against the sides of the cavern.

"That's the light of a torch or lantern," said he to Phelim, who was about to say the same thing. "Stay, there it is again, and it remains. There is another bend in this cavern, and it leads from thence. Thank God! that light betokens human beings. Let us cautiously creep forward, without noise, so as to be able to ascertain who holds the light."

"Be gor! sir," said Phelim, quite exhilarated, "we have our cutlasses still,—we can manage half-a-dozen Spaniards, anyhow; and I am so hungry, I could nearly eat one. What can they be, sir, miners or smugglers?"

"Well, neither, I should say. Smugglers there can be none on this island, and I do not think there are any miners. Several towns, and a great number of people, were destroyed about a hundred

years ago by an earthquake; but, hush! the light is getting stronger, and we shall be able to see where it comes from, by looking round this angle."

Cautiously creeping up to the angle of rock, O'More, kneeling down, was able to reconnoitre, and ascertain the cause of the light. On looking round, he beheld a scene that astonished him. In the middle of a vast cavern were eight or ten men, seated round a large torch. They were a swarthy, fine-looking gang, all Spaniards. From a hamper they had by them, they were taking out provisions of some kind, and two or three large skins of wine; but what surprised our hero, and his follower (who gazed at the provisions and skins of wine with tears of anxiety filling his eyes, and devouring them in imagination) was the piles of garments, caps, swords, cutlasses, and muskets, all piled in a great heap upon the ground, and against the side of the cavern. In a moment Lieutenant O'More solved the mystery, —the garments he saw, and the weapons, were

British; and, no doubt, the gang before him had rifled the dead, and stowed their plunder in the cavern, till the departure of the British ships,— they had evidently stripped the dead and wounded.

Drawing back, O'More consulted with his follower, whether they should make a rush upon the men, or wait for their retiring. Phelim, whose appetite was considerably sharpened by the sight of the hamper and its contents, was for an immediate attack, — their sudden appearance would undoubtedly so astound them that they would fly.

Magnus, who had no objection to partake of the provisions, and who agreed with Phelim that if they waited eight men would make sad havoc with the stock, made up his mind to advance, and trust to circumstances.

Accordingly they rose, and turning the angle of rock, advanced with a quick step, cutlass in hand, towards them. The first sound of their footsteps caused the men to turn round; and, the moment they perceived our hero and his

follower, they uttered a loud cry, started to their feet, and at once extinguished the torch, and all became enveloped in impenetrable darkness,—the men flying precipitately, and, knowing the windings of the caverns, the sound of their footsteps lessened in the distance, and finally ceased. Though Lieutenant O'More and Phelim pursued them by the sound of their footsteps, they, to their intense surprise, found themselves stopped by the termination of the cavern, and could see no outlet whatever.

CHAPTER X.

We will now briefly state what occurred during the period Lieutenant O'More remained in the caverns.

It appears, whilst the terrible disasters that occurred on the mole, resulting in the death of Captain Bowen, Lieutenant Templeton, the captain of the Fox, and nearly every individual forming the storming party, Captain Waller, of the Emerald, and a strong party, contrived to land, and join Captain Trowbridge. Both parties then pushed on for the town, quite ignorant of the terrible disaster that had occurred on the mole. In the town they were joined by Captains Hood and Miller, with a small party; they had

effected a landing, with the loss of all their scaling ladders, ammunition, and provisions.

By this time the Spaniards had assembled, to the amount of nearly eight thousand men, and were rapidly approaching from all quarters. All the boats of the expedition were stove and shattered, therefore there was no chance of re-inforcement. In this dilemma, two stragglers from the Fox cutter, who contrived to get round the rocks, brought the intelligence of the terrible slaughter on the mole.

Captain Trowbridge requested Captain Hood, and an interpreter, to proceed with a flag of truce to the governor. "Tell him," said Captain Trowbridge, "that if the Spaniards advance another yard we will burn the town; but that if he allows us to re-embark with our arms the ships now before the town shall no more molest it, or any of the Canary Islands."

Captain Hood was conducted to the citadel, and introduced to the presence of the governor, Don Juan Antonio Gutteri, who received them

politely enough, though he was exceedingly stately.

"What!" said the governor, in the greatest astonishment; "a mere handful of men dictate terms?"

"But, your excellenza, when a handful of men are rendered desperate there is no knowing what they may do. Captain Trowbridge will assuredly burn the town, though he exceedingly regrets the necessity of doing so. Besides, our ships will not leave a stone of your forts one on the other."

The governor looked grave, remained silent some eight or ten minutes, and then said, "Well, I accede to your terms."

Captain Trowbridge then marched his men, after having received refreshment, by the governor's orders, to the mole, where a fearfully melancholy sight met their gaze. After carefully examining the bodies, numbers of them having been stripped of their garments and arms, to the great indignation of both English and Spaniards, the latter declaring that instant search should be

made for the plunderers, they found there were six or eight wounded lying amongst the dead,—these were carried carefully to the boats, supplied to them by the governor.

"Was not Lieutenant O'More," questioned Captain Hood, who was intimate with our hero, one of the wounded, "was he not with his unfortunate commander in this fatal attempt?"

"Yes," returned the wounded man; "and he, with scarcely more than a dozen, made a rush for the battery,—he passed over my body. I heard him say, 'My poor fellows! my poor fellows! we will revenge your fall;' but I saw him no more."

"He is not amongst the dead," said Captain Hood, "and there are no prisoners in the town. He may have, with two or three of his men, seized a boat, and regained his ship?"

"That's not like what O'More would do," said Captain Hood, in a vexed tone; "but we shall see?"

"He may have attempted to swim round the

point to join you, Captain Hood, hearing the firing, and have perished in the surf," observed a midshipman. "I heard him say, as we landed, if we failed in the attack that might be done."

"God forbid that brave young officer should perish in that way," said Captain Hood. They were, however, forced to embark; and the remnant of that gallant band once more regained their respective ships.

Thus ended that most unfortunate and disastrous expedition against Santa Cruz, which cost England many a brave heart. The squadron sailed for Cadiz; it being generally believed that the brave and gallant O'More perished in the surf, and that an under-current had carried his body to sea. Long afterwards, both Earl St. Vincent and Rear-Admiral Nelson strongly importuned the head of the Admiralty to allow a monument to be erected to the memory of the gallant but unfortunate Captain Bowen. But this was steadily refused, on the plea that the affair in which he fell was a failure.

We now return to our hero in the caverns; the ships had all sailed, with the belief of his having perished. Baffled in his pursuit of the fugitive Spaniards, Lieutenant O'More and McFarlane began groping their way back to where they first saw the Spaniards.

"At all events," said Phelim, "and by the powers, it's a consolation, they must have left what they were going to eat behind them."

"Yes," returned O'More, "and, what is better, it clearly proves there is a way out of these caverns. We must have taken the wrong branch, if we had only a light; but let us look for the food."

Not a ray of light penetrated the vast cavern they were in. Still, by carefully groping from side to side, they came upon the heap of clothing, and Phelim, with a joyful exclamation, said he had the hamper, and one of the skins of wine or water, as the case might be.

"Faith, it would be very acceptable, sir," said Phelim, as he groped and lifted several things

out of the hamper "if we only had a little glim of light. Not but we can easily find the way to our mouths. What this is I can't say, sir; it's soft, and feels like bread of some kind."

Lieutenant O'More was also examining the articles in the hamper, and put his hand on a tin case; on opening this he uttered an exclamation of joy—it was a tinder box with flint and steel.

"Grope about, Phelim, and see if you can lay your hands on that torch. I saw one of the rascals dash on the ground. I can strike a light, and with a bit of spun yarn it will be easy to get a blaze."

"I'll make some tow in a minute, sir," said Phelim; "I have a piece of spun yarn round my neck, fast to my knife."

"This is capital," said the lieutenant, striking a light into the tinder box, and Phelim putting a piece of well pulled oakum on it, blew it into a blaze.

Looking round, they instantly perceived the torch, lying some yards from them. Joyfully

Phelim seized it, and having lighted it, stuck it into a niche in the rock.

"It will last more than an hour, sir; it's a well made article."

"Then as soon as we have satisfied our hunger, we must hasten to explore our way out."

"There's plenty of stuff to make another, sir, out of the materials lying about."

Two stout able bodied men, after fasting nearly forty hours, were not likely to be fastidious in what they ate. Though cold baccalao, garlic, onions, brown bread, and sour wine are certainly not dainties, the two half starved captives made a hearty meal; and then began to think what they should do under the circumstances. They first proceeded to examine the plunder heaped in the cavern, which it was too plain, the villains they had seen had plundered from the dead; and as many of the garments and firearms were covered with wet and rust, they must have stripped numbers of the bodies washed ashore from

the wreck of the Fox cutter, and the men drowned in the surf in landing. Many of the men, no doubt, had money in their pockets.

Whilst looking at the plunder they heard a noise at the further end of one of the branches that led from the cavern they were in. Both men grasped their cutlasses, and stood listening; presently they heard the sound of footsteps, and the next moment a dozen men well armed, two of them carrying torches, entered the cave. The fact was, these men, the lowest class in the place, living partly by fishing, plundering wrecks, or by any species of thieving, had amassed in these caverns considerable plunder of all kinds. When disturbed by the sudden appearance of Lieutenant O'More and Phelim they fled, because they thought they were the advance party of English, who had by some means found another entrance to the caves. They, therefore, in their fear of being made prisoners, and their acts of plunder discovered, fled; but on gaining the open air, and blocking up the entrance with masses of

rock, for the outlet was exceedingly small, they ascended the cliff, and beheld the English ships all under sail, and receding rapidly from the island.

Though they could not solve the mystery of our hero's appearance in the cave, they felt satisfied that they were safe, there were only two to deal with; so having been joined by the rest of the gang, they returned to the cavern, determined to overpower those they saw, and kill them to save themselves. With this pleasant intention they re-entered the cavern, and being strong in numbers advanced boldly.

O'More could very easily imagine that their situation was in truth a desperate one, and that they could expect no mercy from these lawless ruffians. Our hero, of course, was quite ignorant as to how the unfortunate attempt on Santa Cruz had terminated, and that the fleet was, even at that moment, making all sail from the place where so many brave hearts had perished.

As the men advanced in a body Lieutenant O'More and Phelim could perceive that they had

no firearms. Our hero had a brace of pistols fit for service, which he had carefully preserved, and Phelim had one, and both had cutlasses; and besides they had taken possession of two muskets, which they had examined and found fit for use, and loaded; these they placed by their side, as a help if their cutlasses should break.

As the men came within a dozen yards of them, Lieutenant O'More, with cutlass and pistol in hand, called out in Spanish, and in a tone of command,

"If you come with hostile intention, we are prepared for you; we are well armed, and I give you notice we will fight till we die, it will cost some of you your lives, so halt and consider."

"Who are you?" returned one of the men, as they all halted, hearing their own language spoken like a native, and rather startled as they gazed on the two very powerful men, so determined and cool, before them.

"You are not an Englishman?" said another of the men.

"We are English," returned O'More, "though I have Spanish blood in my veins; I am nephew to the Duke of Cabra."

There was not a Spaniard on the island that did not know and remember the name of Cabra. Four years previously the Count de Cabra had visited each of the Canary Islands, when the present governor came out, and remained more than a month. The count was a severe, stern man, and during his stay he gave many of the worst characters on the islands cause to remember his name.

The men on hearing what the lieutenant said, looked frightened. They gathered together in a group, and conversed earnestly and vehemently.

"By St. Patrick, sir," said Phelim, "let us make a dash at them; we'll drive them before us like sheep."

"It is possible we might," said O'More; "still, it's better to wait till they have deliberated; we may make terms, and get away from this place, and get aboard our ships."

After a few minutes one of the men turned, and advancing a step or two, whilst the rest stood quietly where they were, said in a civil tone,

"Well, senor, perhaps, if you will answer a few questions, we may come to terms better than by cutting each other's throats."

"I do not want to cut your throats," returned our hero, "though you have been stripping and plundering the dead."

"Well, senor, they were dead, that I'll swear to; we hurt none of them. May I enquire how you got into this cavern, for in at the mouth we know you did not."

"No," returned O'More, "we did not. We were passing across from the mole to join our comrades, and fell through a hole in the ground, and were nearly smothered with cinders and ashes, in fact it is wonderful we were not killed."

"Santiago!" returned the man, the others joining in ejaculations of all kinds. "No doubt you fell into one of the extinct volcanoes, there are several, and the ashes gave way under

you. You don't know, senor, that your ships have sailed?"

O'More and Phelim started, and in despite of their efforts looked chagrined.

"What became of the different parties that landed on the island?"

"Santiago! they were taken prisoners, senor," said the Spaniard, stoutly. "Our governor allowed them to retire to their ships, provided they sailed on the instant. Their captain accepted these terms, and they are gone."

O'More remained buried in thought for a moment. Their situation was vexatious; they might remain prisoners in Teneriffe many a long day if seen and taken by the governor's soldiers.

"Well, senor," began the Spaniard, breaking in on the lieutenant's thoughts, "I'll tell you what we will do, if you are willing. We will give you a boat and provisions for a week, to-morrow night. You are both seamen; you can easily make one of the islands, and thence get a ship for Europe; but you must give us your

word, you will not try to get out of this place till we come with the boat to-morrow, as soon as it is dark; and also swear you will say nothing about this place to the people on the other island, or betray us in any way, or search the cavern. Even suppose you could cut your way out, and that's not likely, for we are twelve in number, and no matter what you think, we are no cowards, you would be seized by the orders of the governor, who is exasperated, and would be thrown into prison for a long time, or perhaps killed by the people for firing the town."

"Firing the town?" repeated our hero, "is that possible? Why then did the governor permit our commanders and men to return to their ships, on such good terms?"

"Well, senor, they only fired a few houses, and as they were still a strong party, and threatened to fire the whole town, the governor offered them his terms to save the town, and a useless slaughter, for they were surrounded by eight thousand men, ready to fall on them."

This account of the Spaniard was not exactly the state of the case; but the alteration suited his purpose. Lieutenant O'More pondered over the proposals; and, after a few minutes' consideration, agreed to accept them, provided they brought them two good suits of clothes, such as were worn by Spanish seamen, promising they might have those they then wore in return,—for if they landed on any of the other islands, in their present garments, they would at once be made prisoners. To this the men eagerly agreed; and, after a few words more on the subject, prepared to depart, leaving a couple of torches and a box of candles.

"You have food and wine enough till to morrow night," said the men; "and you give us your sacred word that you will not try to leave this till then?"

Our hero gave his word and honour; in a few minutes they retired from the cavern.

"Upon my conscience, sir,—those rascals have something in the wind; they are going to play

us false. I don't like the look of them," said Phelim; "we are cooped up here, like rats in a trap?"

"Well, it's quite possible, Phelim,—they look like a set of ruffians that would not stick at trifles; but, for the moment, I saw no other course to pursue. You see, we might easily cut our way through them, but then we should leave half of them behind us, and we should still remain ignorant of the outlet,—thus we should have an enemy before and behind us; and, whilst seeking to discover our way out, they would have a terrible advantage of us, for the outlet may be very small. Then again, our ships have sailed, and we should be forced to surrender ourselves prisoners of war, and God knows how long we might remain so. On the other hand, it's just possible the rascals may stick to their agreement, and be glad to be rid of us, without any of their number sacrificing their lives."

"Be gor! you may be right, sir," returned Phelim; "but it's no harm to be prepared.

Where shall we make sail for, if they do give us a boat?"

"Why, if the boat is worth anything, and the weather not very boisterous, we might easily make Madeira,—it's not more than two hundred and sixty miles, north by east, of Teneriffe. It's my opinion this gang of plunderers have something more valuable to guard in these caves than the mere garments and arms you see thrown aside there. I remember when the Fox took the provision boat the other day, some of the men said that a rich galleon, with a quantity of gold and silver in bars, and boxes of doubloons, was wrecked on this coast, and that very little of the treasure or boxes was recovered; this wreck took place, they said, about a month ago."

"Let us have a search for it, through the caverns, sir," said McFarlane.

"No, Phelim,—it could do us no possible good if we discovered it; besides, we have nothing to do with it or the robbers, further than to secure our own safety. If they have treasure stowed

away, the more anxious they will be to get rid of us quietly; depend on it, some of them keep watch outside."

Phelim became quite contented, seeing his officer resigned to circumstances. Amongst the plunder before them, Phelim selected a couple of good pistols, and began amusing himself cleaning them with the grease from a candle; he also found powder and ball, quite dry,—so, in a couple of hours, he considered that they had a very good stock of weapons. They had no idea of how time went, for Lieutenant O'More's watch, after its immersion, was not so readily got to work. The pistols he had were those of his deeply lamented friend, Templeton. For an hour he kept pacing the long cavern,—its lofty roof scarcely visible in the dim light of the solitary candle they lighted, instead of a torch. Bread, baccalao, and wine, served for supper; and, after a restless slumber of some hours, they woke up, to find themselves in profound darkness, the candle having gone out. Phelim soon struck a light

and got another candle lighted. He then examined their stock of food.

"Bad cess to them, sir; bad as the food is, it's getting on short allowance. I wonder is it night or day? Be dad, it's a poor life this for you, sir?"

"Yes, Phelim, if it was to last; but I think it is not very far from the time agreed upon,—these men will be here soon."

Phelim then carefully loaded and primed his pistols; and, by our hero's advice, stowed away the rest of the powder and ball about his person.

"If there is any treachery intended us," said the lieutenant, "it will be either when we reach the open air, or in passing through the outlet; so we must be very cautious,—we must not turn our backs on them, on any account."

"Be the powers! they shall not get me with my back to them. You, sir, can face out, and I'll walk backwards, like a crab. It will not be easy to kill us, anyhow."

"No," said the lieutenant. "I will take care of that."

Several hours passed, and our prisoners were getting uneasy, when the flash of a pitch torch, on the sides of the cavern, announced the approach of the Spaniards,—and almost immediately they beheld six of the gang enter the cavern.

"You see, senor, we are punctual," said the Spaniard, who was always the spokesman. He was a short, muscular man, with a most villanous cast of countenance, a long bent nose, but an eagle eye, in years about thirty or thirty-five; the rest were a swarthy, gipsy-looking set, all young,—all under thirty, and habited like fishermen.

"There are the garments, senor," and the Spaniard laid down a bundle. "We will keep faith if you do."

"You need never doubt the word of a British officer," replied Lieutenant O'More, taking the bundle; and, with Phelim, retired within, and

changed merely their outward garments. Having managed their arms about them, and holding their cutlasses in their hands, they returned to the men, saying, "Lead on, we are ready."

"Santiago! let us be moving, that you may gain a good offing before day-light."

"Then walk on before us, as you know the way," returned our hero. The men then walked on, the foremost carrying a torch. After passing out of the great cavern, they took a narrow and not very lofty passage to the right. Our hero could perceive that there were three of those passages branching from the principal cavern, leading to other caverns,—the sides formed by huge rocks, piled one on the other, and the roof rugged, and broken in masses. The men moved on, without speaking, the cavern growing gradually narrower, but still above nine feet high, till it suddenly became so low as to require stooping, and so narrow that only two men could walk abreast. Lieutenant O'More now felt a visible current of air.

"Here is the outlet, senor," said the Spaniard, "you must stoop to pass through. You can hear the surf on the rocks."

Our hero heard it plainly enough. He halted; and then the Spaniard said, "Shall we go first, senor, or you?"

This, if treachery was intended, was rather a ticklish passage; only two could pass out abreast, and that in a very stooping position.

"Now listen to me, my man," said O'More to the Spaniard, the spokesman of the party; "we are but two, and it's very natural we should protect our lives. You may be perfectly true to your word, but we must feel secure before we thrust ourselves in that narrow outlet;" and, as he spoke, he laid his strong hand on the Spaniard's arm. The man started; but he felt the lieutenant's grasp was one of iron, and he trembled,—our hero felt him tremble. Phelim stood close, with a pistol in each hand, glaring at the men, whose savage countenances the red flashing glare of the torch clearly revealed.

"Well," said the Spaniard, "what would you? Why do you suspect us?"

"I merely take precautions," returned our hero; "take you the torch in your hand, and tell your comrades to go on. You and I will follow side by side," and O'More drew his pistol and cocked it. "Now, move on."

For a moment, there was a slight hesitation evident in the men, but the Spaniard our hero held, said,

"Go on, Santos Dios! We mean no harm," and then he added a sentence Lieutenant O'More did not comprehend.

"Follow close, Phelim, and shoot the first man dead who shews the least sign of treachery."

The five men walked stooping, for the roof was scarcely five feet high. The Spaniard whom Lieutenant O'More held by the arm, moved on, holding the torch in his right hand, and in this manner, Phelim following, they traversed a rough passage, feeling the air stronger, and the noise of the sea almost close. Just as they gained the

opening, the Spaniard O'More held, suddenly dashed the torch he carried—at least he intended to do so—in our hero's face, but the lieutenant had all along considered that such a feat might be attempted, and therefore before he could possibly swing it round, he shot him dead, and instantly sprung out into the midst of ten or a dozen men, who, awed by the fate of their leader, lost the opportunity intended. Nevertheless, they attacked our hero and Phelim furiously with their knives and cutlasses. Two more fell from pistol shots, and then our hero and his companion fought furiously with the rest.

It was light enough to see anything around; and Lieutenant O'More beheld a large fishing boat, riding at anchor, about fifty yards from the rocks, the wind blowing fresh off shore.

"Make for yonder boat," cried the lieutenant to Phelim, as with a powerful sweep of his cutlass, he drove the astounded Spaniards before him; Phelim seconding him, and dealing such blows with his cutlass, that none required a

second. They then made a dash, and throwing themselves into the water, struck out for the fishing boat. The Spaniards, four less in number, with oaths and execrations, making for their small boat, hauled up on a shingly beach between the rocks.

Being bold and first-rate swimmers, O'More and his follower reached the boat, and clambered into her.

"Cut the cable, Phelim; cut the cable, they are coming out."

"Aye, aye, sir," returned the sailor; "there's plenty more sauce for them, if they like to try it again."

The wind was blowing fresh off the shore, and the night cloudy; the Spaniards, treacherous ruffians as they were, were far from being cowards. They had planned what they considered the safest way to cut off their prisoners effectually They had treasure concealed in the caverns; many boxes of doubloons and some bars of silver, plundered from the wreck of the galleon, and

they determined to get rid of the English by killing them; but nevertheless, none were willing to risk life if it could be avoided. They felt certain two such powerful men would be sure to kill two or three of them before they would be slain, and each thought it possible he might be one of those killed. Thus they planned to kill them whilst passing through the outlet, and in this they failed, though their leader said, in a language, known only to themselves,

"When I extinguish the torch, fall on them."

Boiling with revenge, and anxious to secure their best and ablest boat, in which they had come to the caverns, which at that time of tide, could not otherwise be approached, the Spaniards pulled out in their small boat with the full determination of retaking the other.

"Hoist away at the sail," said Lieutenant O'More, to his companion. "I will keep the boat from coming along-side till the sail is set."

Seizing a long heavy spar that lay along the thwarts, and used for a bowsprit, for the boat was

a half-decked latine-rigged craft, of nearly fifteen tons—as the small boat pulled up, the men eager to grasp the side, he pushed it with all his great strength right into the small boat, actually driving it through her side, and then letting it go, completely impeded the advance of the boat, which was not more than twelve feet long, deep in the water, with eight men in her.

Phelim gave a loud and derisive cheer, as he hauled the sheet aft, and his master seized the helm. Before the exasperated Spaniards could free their boat from the heavy spar, and thrust one of their jackets into the hole made by it, the boat they thought to pursue and retake, was flying through the water at a spanking rate, leaving the baffled ruffians to regain the shore, and bury the dead bodies of those who had fallen victims to their own treachery.

CHAPTER XI.

We left the O'More family in London, preparing to return to Ireland, Norah's determined rejection of Sir James Boriden's proposals for her hand having roused the whole family into a state of excitement and exasperation against our fair heroine.

Norah, though grieved at the conduct of her family, bore their want of even common kindness calmly and patiently. She took leave of Lady Courtown with sincere regret, for they had become much attached. Lady Courtown was at this time exceedingly uneasy at her little boy shewing symptoms of a delicate constitution.

She doated on the child; she also expected an addition to her family, and was preparing to set out to join his lordship in Bath.

As soon as her health would admit, she intended returning to Courtown Castle, with his lordship—doctors advising the air of his native place as the best remedy for the young heir's restoration to health.

Norah's time passed heavily; her father's and brother's treatment and coldness she bore calmly, but her uncle's insolence and coarseness, she would not submit to so patiently. Her brother's fierce language and bitter reproaches for ruining her family, as he termed her conduct, she treated with the contempt they deserved; but Mr. Hamilton added insult to coarse language. At length, she told him firmly and decidedly, that if she was to be subject to his violence of temper and most unbecoming language, she would leave her father's house, and place herself under the protection of Lady Courtown. She reminded him she should be of age on attaining her eighteenth

year, that being the period fixed upon in her grandmother's will.

Some slight change in her uncle's conduct took place after this. Still her life was exceedingly painful, from many circumstances. She often thought of her meetings with Magnus O'More, and frequently heard from Miss Germain, who never failed in mentioning him when she spoke of Lieutenant Templeton. Norah could not account for it, but she felt a deep and singular interest in her cousin's fate and fortunes. A second attempt of her family to coerce her into marriage, compelled her to repeat the same determination to them as to her uncle. This threat, for some reason or other, silenced the whole family, and on her arrival at Ashgrove she was left quite unmolested.

On Mr. O'More's return to Ashgrove, the establishment was considerably reduced, and very little company received; but four months afterwards, Norah received a letter from Lady Courtown, who had given birth to a little girl,

in which she told her how dreadfully alarmed she was about her boy, fearing he was consumptive; the moment she was able, she was to return to Courtown. His lordship was also very sad indeed, suffering much from his old enemy the gout, which it was feared would fly to the head; and he felt anxious to be again in Courtown Castle. This letter afflicted Norah much, but a week or two afterwards some intelligence reached her father that roused him from his sullen and lethargic mood; he and Mr. Hamilton left Ashgrove, and were absent six weeks. When he returned, he seemed greatly exhilarated, and his son Gorman appeared in tremendous spirits, whilst Mr. Hamilton gave way to his boisterous intemperate habits more than ever.

A letter from the distracted Lady Courtown opened Norah's eyes to this change in her family. The resuming of all the former extravagance at Ashgrove, increase of domestics, &c., &c., and grand entertainments to the Galway families of distinction.

Lord Courtown was not expected to out live another attack; and the darling boy was positively said to be in a slow consumption.

"Oh, dearest Norah," ended Lady Courtown, "if you could only come to me in this, my trying hour, your presence would give me new life and energy."

Norah had an interview with her father, and requested permission to go to Bath.

"Most certainly," he returned, with a smile, that sat rather uncomfortably on his features. "Your brother Gorman is going to London, and will leave you in Bath. I am sorry to hear Lord Courtown is breaking up. As to the boy, I understand there is no chance of preserving his life; he may live for a short time, but it's a hopeless case."

"I most sincerely trust Providence will restore the dear child to health," said Norah. "Doctors are often mistaken; the child's delicate state arises from fever after measles."

Mr. O'More made no remark, and Norah,

satisfied at obtaining the desired permission, retired to prepare for her journey. In the evening, she took a walk to see Bessy McFarlane, who had returned home, to request her to accompany her. Bessy most willingly assented.

"We have just had a letter, Miss Norah, from Phelim, with the post mark of Gibraltar on it."

Why should Norah feel her heart beat faster at the mention of a letter from Phelim? We cannot say, but we record facts.

"I hope he is well, Bessy," said Norah.

"No, indeed, miss; but he is better. He says he and more than fifty of the crew of their ship, and some of the officers were attacked by a very bad fever, and he is now in hospital; at least he was when this letter was written."

"I am sorry for that, Bessy. Did he mention—" Norah hesitated, but then said, "Mr. O'More."

"Dear me, Miss Norah, catch Phelim writing a letter without mentioning his young master. It is all about him, miss; he says he's the pride

of the Terpsichore; that the men would go through fire and water for him. They have taken several prizes, and fought one or two desperate actions, that their commander is the most gallant officer in the service; and he and their first lieutenant, Mr. Templeton, are such good officers to their men. Phelim begs me to tell him all the news about home, and particularly all about Ashgrove and the family; and do you know, Miss Norah,—you won't be angry with Phelim, I am sure, will you?"

"Why should I be angry with him, Bessy," said Norah, with a smile.

"Indeed, miss, he has asked such a curious question."

"What is it, Bessy?"

"Why, miss, he wishes to know if you were in London, and in the park, when Mr. Magnus met Mr. Hamilton and some ladies. You remember the time when you and Miss Germain were so frightened?"

"Yes," returned Norah, very thoughtful, her

features betraying the feelings she experienced. "Indeed, Bessy, that is a strange question for your brother to ask. It looks as if it came from the young lieutenant."

Bessy's cheeks were the colour of a pæony. But she said,

"Perhaps so, miss; so I will not answer that question," and she looked her young mistress in the face, her blue eyes reading Norah's thoughts.

Norah smiled, saying,

"It's a very harmless question after all, Bessy, and the truth is always best. You will be ready after to-morrow, Bessy."

"Yes, miss; quite ready."

As Norah walked towards Ashgrove, she encountered the rector, Mr. Creagh, on his favourite mare, jogging quietly along, going on a visit to Mr. Lynch, a gentleman residing within a mile or so of Ashgrove.

"Well, my dear young lady," said Mr. Creagh, immediately alighting, and leaving his old and attached beast to follow of her own accord, "I

am rejoiced to see you. I have not had that pleasure since your return, owing to my absence in Cork."

"I heard you were away, my dear sir; but I rejoice to see you looking so well."

"I have to thank God, my dear Miss Norah, for my wonderful health at seventy-eight. I hope you left Lord and Lady Courtown, and child well."

"I left them tolerably well," said Norah; "but I grieve to say a recent letter from Lady Courtown declares his lordship's life is very precarious, and the dear little boy is, she fears, consumptive."

"Ah!" said the rector, with a sigh. "You see, my dear, that sorrows and trials are not confined to the poor; I deeply regret to hear this, for his lordship is a good and kind landlord, and no better-hearted woman breathes than Lady Courtown. She never enquires, when she distributes her liberal and generous donations, what is the creed of the sufferer, or the needy. She

clothes and feeds all alike, and provided their conduct merits it, all receive marks of her and her husband's bounty. His loss would be severely felt."

"I am going to Bath after to-morrow," said Norah, "to stay with Lady Courtown; I will mention to her your kind enquiries, and your regret at hearing of her trials."

"Do so, my dear, I beg you; for what I say I sincerely feel. By-the-bye, Miss Norah," continued Mr. Creagh, "I had, some months back, a long letter from Lieutenant O'More, dated Plymouth; I wrote back a reply, but most unfortuately my letter reached Plymouth, owing to severe gales stopping the packet, just a day too late. His ship had sailed for the Mediterranean, and my letter was returned to me. Have you heard anything of him? for he interests me very much."

"I have heard that he is well, my dear sir, and distinguishing himself. Bessy McFarlane heard

from her brother the other day from Gibraltar. He is in the same ship as Mr. O'More."

"Then probably a letter would reach him directed to Gibraltar; he was so anxious to know his mother's name."

Norah hesitated a moment, and then said, though her voice seemed a little tremulous,

"And what was his mother's maiden name, my dear sir."

"Anybody, my child, may learn her name," said Mr. Creagh, "for she was married, you know, in my church, and the name entered in the parish register was Fernanda de Cabra. It is not right, my dear Miss Norah," continued the old man, with a sigh, "for me to talk with you on the past; but, indeed, it is my firm conviction that Lieutenant O'More's mother was married to your uncle in Spain. De Cabra is, I understand, a great name in that country; and from enquiries I made when in Cork, I am led to believe that Lieutenant O'More's grandfather is

still alive, and is one of the ministers of the present king of Spain; at all events my informant, who was formerly Spanish Consul at Cork, says so."

Norah made no remark, and coming to the cross road, leading to Mr. Lynch's, she bade the worthy rector adieu. Giving her his blessing, he remounted his old companion, and pursued his way. Norah walked on extremely thoughtful, as she slowly pursued her way to the house.

It was very apparent to Norah that all her family looked confidently upon the death of Lord Courtown and his infant son, and were greatly exhilarated. Her mother talked a great deal about Courtown Castle, upon which Lord Courtown had expended large sums, in improvements. Wondered what provision was made for his little girl, should it live, and whether his widow would be entitled to hold any portion of the estates during her life.

Norah sighed, but remained silent during the evening. Her brother talked of inviting a large

party for the shooting season, and wondered if Sir James de Boriden would like to come over for a season; there was as good shooting and hunting in Galway as anywhere in England.

"It will be a great acquisition to this part of the country for sporting gentlemen," observed Mr. Hamilton, "if the next Lord Courtown should preserve the manors; the present lord has been shamefully remiss in permitting his lands to be shot over by any gentleman requesting permission; whereas were they preserved there would not be such shooting in any county in Ireland."

Norah and her brother travelled post in a chariot of her father's to Dublin, Bessy McFarlane and Mr. Gorman O'More's valet occupying the seat behind. The packet for Holyhead was to sail from the Pigeon-house Wall, at an early hour the morning following their arrival. It was the latter end of April, but to judge by the bitter east wind then blowing, anyone might assume it was any one of the winter months.

Though the long sea wall, that now stretches out from the fort and battery called the Pigeon House, was not then built with its lighthouse at the termination, thus protecting the port of Dublin from sea gales, and a tremendous sea, nevertheless the little packet that was to convey some six and thirty passengers of various ages and sex to Holyhead, was sheltered under the Pigeon-house wall and pier; but her passengers had a very good view of the heaving sea, breaking in all directions upon the sand bank called the North Bull, and looking beyond that again they could see the rocky shores of Howth covered with foam, and the spray dashing high in the air. This sight and the knowledge that the wind was dead on end, and the packet for the voyage the very smallest of the five on the station, threw a considerable damp over the vivacity of the passengers.

Gorman O'More took the chariot with him to England, intending to dispose of it in London, and bring back a much more fashionable carriage.

The chariot was carefully secured upon deck, and some gentleman, amongst the passengers, had two saddle horses down in the hold, as they were carried in those days—and those days are in the memory of many now living; but, to judge by our present mode of transit across the same channel in noble steamers, affording the accommodation of a first-rate hotel, those days to look back upon, appear very remote indeed.

As soon as the mail bags were on board, and the friends and relations, uncles, aunts, and cousins had taken leave, the warps were cast off, "good-bye's" shouted out, and "God bless you," "love to John," and "remember me kindly to Susan," and "the Lord be with you," from about four score beggars, who by dint of incessant prayers and recommendations to all the saints known in Ireland, from St. Patrick upwards, had gleaned a few coppers and a solitary fivepenny bit from some more charitable passenger—Norah, no doubt.

Under a double-reefed mainsail the Duchess of

Marlborough, commanded by Captain Golightly, pitched her bluff bows into the first sea she encountered after opening the bay. This specimen of her abilities in diving created an immense panic in her passengers; in a trice the deck was deserted, and the little cabin filled with startled occupants.

Norah never suffered from sea sickness; and, sooner than be nearly stifled in the cabin (for very shortly after leaving several passengers exhibited lively tokens of their sensibility to a malady unconquerable when once it attacks), Norah and Bessy McFarlane sought refuge in the chariot, though indeed Bessy had sundry misgivings about its security; but the captain assured Miss O'More that there was not the slightest danger — it was always very rough over the bar, with easterly winds; but this one had not fortunately the same number of lives as a cat, for there was evidently going to be a shift of wind into the north-west; and in one of the squalls, with a heavy shower of rain, it did shift,

and the Duchess of Marlborough had the felicity of showing her stern to the gale, instead of her bluff bows, and in nine hours she was in Holyhead; a fact no one, except her captain and crew, ever dreamt of.

At the period of our tale Holyhead was about as miserable a little spot as one could well imagine, not that it is in any way remarkable at the present day, except for its gigantic harbour of refuge, still in progress. It had, however, a good hotel, and there Mr. Gorman O'More, who suffered horribly from the grim enemy, sea-sickness, said he would stay for that night and the following day, to recruit his exhausted powers.

"Of all the infernal vessels that ever floated, Norah, that vile Duchess of Marlborough is the worst," said Gorman, throwing himself on a sofa in a drawing-room, where Norah was comfortably taking her tea.

"I thought she was a fine little vessel," replied Norah; "and I rather enjoyed seeing her plunge so—"

"There; for mercy's sake," interrupted Gorman, "don't talk of plunges. I feel this sofa move as if it were inclined to disappear under me; and that tray on the table seems whirling round like one of the witches in Macbeth."

"Better take a cup of tea and go to bed," said Norah; "it is nearly ten o'clock."

"Tea, indeed! pretty stuff after nine hours' torture, and witnessing such scenes in that horrible cabin."

"Why did you not come on deck, and sit in the chariot?" said Norah.

"Because I always go into a berth, and lie on my back; and I was pretty well till a brute of a man, weighing, I can swear to it, eighteen stone, unfortunately got into the berth over my head, and being dreadfully sick and unable to turn, the bottom of the berth gave way, and to my horror, he came right upon me; he groaned frightfully. I do believe he thought he had gone through the bottom of the craft, and he roared 'steward' till I thought he would choke. As to

myself, I was choking; and besides, those fearful berths, much too-small for one, were quite blocked up with two. I assure you, it was as much as ever the steward and stewardess could do to drag him out by the leg To make matters worse, the fool of a man had stripped himself to go to bed, and the cabin being full of females, such a bother as he kicked up I never heard, the women throwing shawls and cloaks and all kinds of things over him; but he was quite reckless, he was so sick. All he could say as he rolled about like a stranded porpoise, was 'steward,' 'brandy,' 'no water; I never take water at sea.' At length, they rolled him into a lower berth; but I was destroyed by this monster, for I was forced to get up to get rid of the broken boards, &c., which had tumbled in upon me, and then my sickness became unbearable; but touch the bell, Norah, I will try what a beefsteak and a bottle of sherry will do."

"You cannot be very bad, Gorman," said Norah, with a smile, "if you can manage to sup

on those articles. However, I hope they will enable you to start early to-morrow, for I am very anxious to get to Bath."

The waiter entering the room, presented Mr. O'More a card, saying,

"A gentleman in the parlour desired me to give you that; he wishes to see you."

Gorman O'More looked at the card, and as he read the name, turned exceedingly pale, and evidently became agitated; he looked at his sister, who perceived his change of manner, as she rose from her chair, saying she felt tired, and would seek her chamber.

As soon as Norah had retired, Gorman O'More rung the bell, and desired the waiter to shew the gentleman in the parlour up, to make haste with the supper, and instead of one bottle of sherry to bring two.

CHAPTER XII.

GORMAN O'MORE'S sickness seemed suddenly to have vanished; he started up from his recumbent position and paced the room, rather agitated, exclaiming to himself,

"How confoundedly unfortunate; what can he be doing this side of the water? What a fool I was to—" he had no time to say more, for the waiter opened the door, ushering in the supper and the gentleman who had sent up his card.

The latter was a tall, strong man, of some three and thirty years. By his dress and bearing, he was a gentleman; but there never was a face more difficult to read than the certainly handsome face of the stranger.

The gentlemen shook hands, and though Gorman O'More evidently wished to appear at ease, he was far from it. The stranger was perfectly at home.

"I scarcely expected to see you here, Sinclair. I see that is the name you travel by," observed O'More.

"I suppose not," returned the other; "but let us sit down. I have not supped, and I ordered mine to be added to yours. We can talk after our appetites are appeased; that confounded Duchess of Marlborough is quite as uneasy a craft as her famous namesake."

"Were you in the packet?" exclaimed Gorman, in surprise. "Where were you?"

"In a private berth I hired. I heard the row between you and that bloated individual in the scanty garments; but I was rather uncomfortable myself, so I remained quiet."

"I did not see you, even in coming on board."

"No, I should think not," returned the

stranger, with his equivocal smile; "for I stowed myself away—as sailors say—an hour before starting, for peculiar reasons. Let me help you to another wing of this fowl; really, though sea sickness is a bore at the time, you enjoy everything after it amazingly."

"Yes," returned Gorman; "you come round pretty fast to your feed."

"So that beautiful girl I saw," said the stranger, helping himself to a glass of sherry, and looking at Gorman, "is your sister; how she has grown since I first saw her."

"Yes," returned O'More, uneasily, "that was my sister."

"I rejoice to hear it, Gorman; she's very lovely! You must introduce me to-morrow, and propose me as a third in your chariot as far as Bath."

Gorman started, looked very pale, but tossing off a glass of sherry, he said,

"Impossible! My sister is so exceedingly fastidious, and she would surely remember you."

"If she is fastidious so much the better. So am I; you know that," and again his strange smile made Gorman almost shudder. "The fact is, my friend," continued the stranger, who passed under the name of Sinclair, but who was in reality the notorious Colonel McCormac, one of the most determined of the United Irishmen and violent leaders of the Defenders—"the fact is, Gorman, now that we have met, it is best that we should understand one another. Two years ago, you enrolled yourself as a United Irishman, and also joined the Defenders and took the oath. You then promised me the hand of your sister Norah, who was to have thirty thousand pounds fortune on attaining her eighteenth year. Tis true you introduced me to her when in Dublin, but she was barely sixteen at the time, quite a child; and she did not, I confess, appear to even look at me. She can have no remembrance of me now; she has grown into a lovely woman, and besides, in six months she will be able to claim this thirty thousand pounds, which

will be immensely useful in forwarding our views and settling what you know—"

"But," interrupted Gorman O'More, with a flushed face, considerably agitated, "everything is altered since the period I enrolled myself as a United Irishman. My Uncle Hamilton first led me into that dangerous act, and introduced me to you when I was almost a boy. I shall withdraw myself from the Society now that I find the intentions of the United Irishmen are to sever Ireland from England."

"You are too late, my dear Gorman; quite too late," returned the Colonel, very quietly helping himself to wine. "All United Irishmen taking the oath, and becoming members of the Society of Defenders since the year '96, are doomed men. Government has possession of all their names. That notorious villain Reynolds, formerly a silk merchant, of Dublin, and a Catholic, has betrayed us, and surrendered all our names to the government. Emmet, Bond, Jackson, Sweetman, McNeiven, have been all seized yesterday; war-

rants are out against Lord Fitzgerald and myself. We are going to London, to meet a confidential person from the French Directory. We shall have an army and a fleet from France shortly. You will receive the title of colonel, particularly stipulated for—"

"But," impatiently interrupted O'More, still in an agony, "I will have nothing to do with it; I was little more than a foolish boy, led into this scrape by my uncle and you. I will make my peace with the government."

A low chuckling laugh of mockery burst from the lips of Colonel McCormac.

"Then you must never show your face in Ireland again," said he; "there are five thousand men sworn to assassinate Reynolds the Informer and others. They are pensioned by the government, it is true, but that won't save them. Reynolds is a Catholic, and sold his country for mere love of gold. Now you may perceive that added to this, your position is rather critical.

How do you mean to settle the seven thousand pounds I procured for you, to squash that affair, you remember, eh?"

"Seven thousand pounds," repeated O'More, savagely, "I never received fifteen hundred out of it; it was a scandalous deception."

"I admit that," returned the colonel, taking a book out of his breast pocket, turning over some papers, and selecting one. "Here, you see—read it—is a letter from Mr. McCullough, attorney, Dublin, in which he threatens instant proceedings against you and me; you as the principal, and I as the collateral security. Now, you see, I am not worth a sous; your father is, and you are next heir, so he will have his seven thousand pounds with interest and costs. He holds our bonds. Then that affair in which you shot poor Curtis,—of course we brought it in as an accident, and it passed off; but you and I know—"

"What," exclaimed the excited Gorman

O'More, swearing a terrible oath, and looking fearfully pale, "do you insinuate that I murdered him?"

"Oh, dear, no," returned the colonel, putting up the letter; "but you shot him before he could cock or lift his pistol; of course it was nervousness, and too great anxiety to vindicate your honour, still—"

"I tell you what, Colonel McCormac—"

"Sinclair—Sinclair, if you please; I am not ambitious of titles this side the water," interrupted the Colonel.

Gorman bit his lip, and regarded his fiendish tormentor with a dark, revengeful look, saying,

"Now out with it; what do you want me to do?"

"Simply—now that we have so glorious an opportunity—now that your lovely sister is in your power, take her to Gretna. I will provide the clergyman; once mine her tears and reproaches will cease, her fortune will clear your debt, and set me up."

"Never!" fiercely exclaimed Gorman, rising from his chair. "Never! I was a boy, a dupe, when I was led into the snares you now threaten me with; but it is not too late to retrieve my error. I will not sacrifice my sister to a man who—"

"Take care, O'More, what you say," said Colonel McCormac, rising and fixing his terrible eyes upon his victim. "You would have sacrificed your sister to Sir James de Boriden, a man as notorious as I am in many respects; but he has a rent-roll of fifteen thousand a year. You think that you and your father are the next heirs to the Courtown titles and estates, but you are not. Do you think I have been asleep these two years? No, no, we are not done yet; mark me, change your mind before ten o'clock to-morrow, or reckon upon me as your bitterest enemy."

So saying, Colonel McCormac retired.

Gorman O'More sunk back in his chair clench-his hands with a passionate vehemence, and drawing his breath hard.

"Yes," he soliloquised, "I have been expecting this. I knew one day or another that it would come; and yet, what can the villain do? he is a proscribed man. I have a mind to give him up, and surrender myself to the government. With our prospects we can easily raise seven or eight thousand pounds. But what can he mean, 'you are not next heir to the Courtown title?' What can he know? Surely he does not mean that Magnus O'More can ever prove his legitimacy; it's impossible, his father could not do it; and I do not believe he ever was married legally before this Magnus O'More's birth. Confound him, I wish he could be shot in some of those sea fights; that would put an end of all further trouble on that question. As to marrying Norah to that terrible man, it's not to be thought of. If Sir James will still take her, I would join him in any plan to force her into a union; but with that fiend of a man, who will not cease till he has ruined us all,—never!"

Thus soliloquising, Gorman O'More finished the wine, and retired to bed, in a bewildered state of mind.

For the elucidation of the above scene between Gorman O'More and Colonel McCormac, we must go back two or more years, and briefly relate how Gorman became acquainted with so notorious an adventurer as Colonel McCormac.

During Gorman O'More's career in college the terrible scenes enacting in France had a wonderful effect in Ireland, in instigating an enthusiastic feeling for liberty. It was the age of reforming clubs and regenerating societies. Gorman, inflated by vanity; but really possessing neither talent nor judgment, and misled by the pernicious precepts of his really talented but vicious uncle, Hamilton, plunged eagerly into the terrible dissipation that then existed in Dublin, and also embraced with ardour the false notions of liberty entertained by the wild youths of the metropolis. At a club, to which he was introduced by his

uncle, he first met Colonel McCormac. He was not a colonel of any government service, or regiment, but a colonel in some Spanish legion.

McCormac was a notorious adventurer. He was the son of a Galway gentleman, of good property, near Ashgrove; who, reckless and extravagant, had spent the property, ruined the family, and finally left young McCormac, at the age of eighteen, to shift for himself. Well-educated, of a handsome person, but utterly depraved habits, he betook himself to the metropolis,—for some desperate exploit he was forced to fly; went to Spain, got into the Spanish service,—committed some act there that forced him to quit that country, and came back to Dublin with the title of colonel. At this time he was past thirty. He mixed himself up with the political parties then struggling for existence against the Government,—became a great friend of James Napper Tandy, and others; Lord Fitzgerald was deceived in him, for all the time Colonel McCormac was no patriot, but worked solely for his own in-

dividual aggrandizement; professed to be a Catholic, though his father and family were Protestants. He and Mr. Hamilton and Gorman were sworn friends. By degrees, McCormac gained a strange power over Gorman,—he fascinated him, got him enrolled in the so-called National Guard; and Gorman wore the green uniform, with the buttons having a harp, surmounted by a cap of liberty—made speeches, was applauded by the populace; and in fact, at this period, fancied himself about to restore his country to a state of perfect freedom,—a blessed Arcadia Ireland was to become, Colonel McCormac, in his ideas, was the only man, besides himself, capable of understanding her wants. He was next enrolled as a United Irishman; then took the oath as a Defender. At this time, Mr. O'More and family spent a few months in Dublin. Norah was scarcely sixteen. Gorman introduced his friend, McCormac, promising that he would be sure to induce his sister, when a little older, to give him her hand and fortune. Norah did not even be-

stow a look upon the Colonel,—she would not have recognized his features the next day. About this time Gorman's debts were becoming heavy in Dublin; and his father refused any further to encourage his extravagance.

One evening, at a supper party, Gorman quarrelled with a gentleman of the name of Curtis; to quarrel, and to fight on the instant, was the fashion of the day. Pistols were procured; and the two mere youths taken into an empty room, in a lone house, in what was then styled the Liberty in Dublin. McCormac was Gorman's second. "The moment you raise your pistol," said the Colonel, "fire."

Gorman was anything but a brave man, he now proved he was a coward,—and, in his trepidation, when he saw young Curtis stretch out his hand to receive his pistol, he actually, in his nervous agitation, raised his pistol and fired, and, melancholy to relate, killed his unfortunate antagonist on the spot. Gorman was incapable of action; he was bewildered, stupified. His

second, the colonel, and his uncle Hamilton hurried him from the spot, and put him to hide in a deserted mansion near Bridge-street, at the back of the old Brazen Head Inn, a place notorious at that period, and still existing in Dublin. Here the Colonel so worked upon the fears of Gorman O'More, aided by his most unprincipled and degraded relative, who was seldom or ever sober, as to get him to sign a bond for seven thousand pounds—Colonel McCormac making a great parade at becoming his collateral security.

Part of this money the colonel intimated was to go as hush money, to save him from being tried for the death of young Curtis; who, poor fellow, was supposed to have fallen in a duel, and no notice was ever taken of the affair, as the young man, then scarcely twenty-two—same age as Gorman O'More—was an orphan, and without friends or connections; and had also made himself notorious as one of the National Guard. Finally, McCormac pocketed about a thousand

pounds of the money; Gorman received one thousand five hundred to pay his debts ; and Mr. Hamilton had five hundred; the rest of the seven thousand was pocketed by the lenders, as compensation for the risk they ran in taking the bond, and for interest, as it was not likely the young man would pay any, and the bond was not to be put in force for two years. McCormac then told his dupe that he had better go into the country, or to England, for a short time, till the circumstances were forgotten ; this advice Gorman followed, and from that time he saw no more of Colonel McCormac.

But the colonel never lost sight of his victim ; he had not yet finished with him. The meeting in the packet was, however, accidental, for the colonel was on his way to England, as the city of Dublin was then too hot for him to remain within its precincts—he was a marked man.

CHAPTER XIII.

The next morning Gorman O'More arose but little refreshed, looking pale and haggard. The first question he asked of his valet was,

"Do you know whether the gentleman who supped with me last night is below or not?"

"No, sir," returned the valet; "I was just going to deliver to you his message. He went by the mail, and left his compliments, regretting being obliged to leave; but bidding me tell you he would be sure to see you in London."

Gorman felt greatly relieved; met Norah at breakfast in good spirits, and ordered post horses at ten o'clock.

"Who was the gentleman with you last

night?" asked Norah, who looked rather pale; "he kept you up very late?"

"A college friend,—a Mr. Sinclair; but how did you know we were up late?"

"I heard you talking through those folding doors,—my room was next this."

Gorman felt annihilated; he looked first at the folding doors, and then at his sister, upon whose sweet features was an air of deep despondency.

"Ah!" said Gorman, with a laugh, "it is to be hoped you did not hear what two young men said,—eh, Norah?"

"I heard every word spoken by that false traitor, who has been your ruin, Gorman," said Norah, solemnly, and looking with touching affection into her brother's face.

Gorman was speechless; he dropped the cup he was carrying to his lips, and leaned back in his chair, pale as death.

"Gorman! Gorman!—for God's sake—alas! no; for your own soul's sake, before it is too late, turn aside from the path that is leading you

to destruction! Above all, renounce that vile man's companionship; and, alas! that I should have to say it, your uncle's,—he who ought to have led you into the right path; but who poisoned and destroyed your young mind."

Gorman O'More started from his chair,—his face flushed, and his eyes darted most malignant glances at his sister.

"This is too bad," said he. "You meanly listen to a conversation, and then, forsooth, read me a lecture upon past conduct. If you did overhear our conversation, you might at least have heard that I refused to join in any project against you. Had I been so evilly inclined, as you seem to give me credit for, you might have preached this sermon with more success. Pray, did that precious Bessy McFarlane, without whom you will not stir—did she overhear this conversation you make so much of?"

"No, thank Heaven! she did not," replied Norah. "She did not sleep in my room last night, for there was no double-bedded room. The head

of my bed was against that door; hearing my name mentioned in a sentence I first heard determined me to listen,—self-preservation will induce us to do many things we may not approve of otherwise."

"Well," interrupted Gorman, with a sneering laugh, "you may spare your lectures for to-day. You have heard nothing I care a straw about. I acted for the best. As to those acts committed when I was a mere youth, and under such hopeful guidance, they are past remedy. I shall take more care for the future; all I request is that you will not torment me on the subject,—if you do, I shall go on the box for the rest of the journey," and, humming a tune, the speaker walked out of the room, paid the bill, and in ten minutes they were rolling along the road, with four post horses to the chariot.

The day was remarkably fine, Gorman O'More therefore rode on the box, Bessy inside. Norah was deeply hurt, and greatly depressed in spirit. She plainly perceived that the seeds of evil were

too deeply sown in her brother's heart to be eradicated by anything she could say or do. What she had overheard shocked and horrified her. By McCormac's account, her brother had actually shot an unfortunate young man, before he had time to point a pistol in his own defence. She had heard a rumour of Gorman's having fought a duel in Dublin, but that was all; that his antagonist was killed she never heard, and now she might almost say he was murdered. She trembled with the horror she felt. She also perceived that she herself was destined to become the prey of a reckless adventurer, a traitor, and a villain.

During the remainder of the journey to Bath Gorman O'More avoided all conversation with his sister; and, setting her down at Lady Courtown's mansion, continued his journey to London, without even bidding her farewell.

Lady Courtown received Norah with the warmest affection, his lordship with evident delight. He was free from an attack at this time, and easy in

mind, but quite incapable of any exertion. Their little boy, to Norah's infinite joy, was better, and in good spirits; the little stranger was not yet christened,—it was Lord Courtown's wish that Norah should be its godmother, and that its name should be Norah.

After some days our heroine partially recovered her spirits; it was not natural at her age that they should remain long depressed. His lordship felt the influence of her presence,—she shed a gleam of sunshine upon his lonely hours, for he was unable to read or divert his mind, and was a man fond of literary pursuits. Norah read to him; chatted; played the harp, of which he was passionately fond; she romped with little Francis and nursed her namesake till it crowed with delight.

"God bless you, dear girl," Lady Courtown would say. "You have made a change come over us all; I was very nervous till you came. Do not you think little Francis improves? He scarcely coughs now at all, and there's a colour on his

cheek. Doctors, even the cleverest, make mistakes sometimes."

"Indeed they do, Euphemia; I do not believe the child is at all consumptive. There is no consumption in his lordship's family, and I have heard you say your family are noted for their longevity."

"Such is the fact, Norah," said Lady Courtown; "but do you know, a rather strange determination has come over Lord Courtown; his lawyer is with him daily. Who do you imagine he has taken it into his head to appoint as sole guardian to his son, on his demise, whenever that may take place?"

"I have not an idea," said Norah.

"It is certainly a very strange resolution; but, you know, he was always, with the best heart in the world, very eccentric."

"Very true," said Norah; "but his eccentricities never hurt or injured any one, quite the contrary. Who is to be guardian of little Francis? though I trust his lordship may live many years."

"I tell you this, in confidence," answered Lady Courtown; "for I know your feelings upon certain subjects. He has appointed Roderick Magnus O'More the guardian of his child, and what is more, has made him his executor and residuary legatee."

Norah looked at Lady Courtown in profound amazement, repeating,

"Mr. Magnus O'More? You astonish me. Why he is barely—let me see—yes—just twenty-one and a few weeks."

"Yes, his age his lordship ascertained accurately. I am quite aware of the contents of his will, for he insisted, much against my inclination, to my listening to Mr. Harcourt, his solicitor, reading it; and then he asked me, most affectionately, if I had any objection to any portion of it. I was deeply affected at the time, for somewhat eccentric as it was, everything in it showed a generous and noble heart. It was then signed, sealed, witnessed, and delivered over to

the custody of Mr. Harcourt, and since that my husband is much easier in mind."

"But how is it that his lordship has taken such a strange fancy to Lieutenant O'More; appointing him guardian and executor, shows a vast confidence in Mr. O'More's integrity and abilities, and he so young, too."

"In the first place, Norah, his lordship had once a great friendship for Lieutenant O'More's father; then he had a strange dream, which somehow made a great impression on him. Latterly, he has been making great enquiries about Mr. Magnus O'More; he desired his solicitor to write to Captain Broomsby, to enquire every particular concerning this really fine and high-spirited officer, and he received the most flattering reply. Lord B—— was here about a month ago, and he spoke in the highest terms of his protegé, as he styles Lieutenant O'More; and he says, if he is spared, he will make a proud name for himself in the service."

Norah thought a good deal of all this.

"Surely," said she to herself, "his lordship must be persuaded that Lieutenant O'More is the unquestionable legitimate son of the late Roderick O'More."

The girl thought so too, in her own heart, but she questioned whether he could possibly substantiate his claims; and what a terrible blow it would be to her family if he did.

Two months after this his lordship so far recovered as to be able, by slow journeys, to proceed to Ireland. As the sea agreed with him, and he suffered much less on that element than travelling by land, it was determined to embark from Weymouth for Limerick, and Lord B—— having placed the admiralty yacht at his disposal, he reached his destination with exceeding little, if any, inconvenience. From Limerick he proceeded to Courtown Castle, where his presence created the greatest excitement and joy amongst his tenantry.

The sea voyage of three days appeared to have

had a most beneficial effect upon the young heir of Courtown ; who, to his mother's and father's infinite delight, seemed to have thrown off every alarming symptom. Norah, after a fortnight's stay at Courtown, returned to Ashgrove, promising not to let a week pass without a visit to the castle. Lady Courtown did not say one word to Norah respecting silence to her family, regarding the communication she had made to her, for she felt quite confident in her young friend's discretion.

The family at Ashgrove were pretty much in the same state as when she left. There were two or three letters from Emily Germain, who was in Scotland on a visit, whilst Norah had been in Bath. Gorman O'More was still in London. Mr. O'More was not quite so exhilarated as when Norah left for England, her mother fretful and impatient in temper. Her brother Arthur she had seen frequently in Bath ; he was well and improving rapidly.

" So," remarked Mrs. O'More to her daughter,

"his lordship has taken a new lease of his life, and the young heir revives for a time."

"Indeed, I fancy, mother, that the doctors were mistaken; he is growing a fine lively boy."

"That's always the way with consumptive patients," said Mrs. O'More, sharply; "you can be no judge. I have it from good authority that it's quite impossible he can live twelve months. You are a strange girl, Norah; your attachment to that Euphemia Blake, that was, is quite unnatural. I dare say you feel little for the disappointment inflicted on your family by the preposterous marriage of that imbecile eccentric nobleman. It was very plain to every one that he married Miss Blake for no other earthly reason than to wound the feelings of your father, and to cut your uncle out. I am astonished that my brother George ever thought of such a starch piece of prudery and affectation as Euphemia Blake, who now plays the lady bountiful in order to divert people's minds from her un-

maidenly conduct in grasping so eagerly at the bait of a coronet."

"Indeed, dear mother, you do Lady Courtown great injustice."

"Oh, dear me, do not begin to trumpet her praises; we hear enough of her as it is. We heard that the old lord made his will, and settled his affairs when in Bath. Did you pick up any information on that subject, whilst staying there?"

Norah looked up from her work with a look of intense surprise, saying,

"Surely, dear mother, you cannot suppose, even had I heard any family matter spoken of in my presence, that I should repeat it."

"Undoubtedly, to your own family, especially as our interests are so materially mixed up with the Courtown family."

Norah made no reply, but continued plying her needle.

"You have not heard, I suppose," said Mrs.

O'More, who never touched work, fancy or otherwise, and who passed her evenings very listlessly when there was no company, "that your uncle is going to be married to a very wealthy widow, in Dublin."

"No, mother," said Norah, not very much surprised, for her uncle's speculations in marriage were very frequent, and always ended in nothing.

"I do not suppose you are much interested. You never appear to me as one of the family, with your strange predilections for strangers."

"Surely, mother, you wrong me; you cannot call my godfather, Lord Courtown, a stranger, and I am sure Lady Courtown, whom we have known for many years, is not one either."

"All I can say is," returned her mother, "that you certainly seem to feel quite vividly all matters relative to the Courtowns. You also have taken a strange partiality to that girl, Bessy McFarlane, when you know your father declares that he has been grossly ill-treated by her father. It looks so strange to see a girl giving herself up

to persons whose interests are directly opposed to those of her family."

To Norah's great relief her father's entering the room put an end to the conversation.

A few days after this a messenger from Courtown reached Ashgrove; Lord Courtown had died in the night, from a terrible attack of gout in the stomach. This unexpected event created a tremendous sensation at Ashgrove.

Mrs. O'More's first exclamation, as she fell back in her chair—the family were at breakfast—was, "How unfortunate!"—Norah, the tears running down her cheeks, rose; and as she left the room she heard her mother finish her sentence—"that that boy is still living; only for him—"

We pass over six months. Lady Courtown remained in Courtown Castle, in deep affliction, constantly consoled, however, by the presence of Norah. His lordship's will had been opened and read, and rumours of its contents were circulated through the county. It was a strange, eccentric document, but no one had cause to complain. His

immense estates of course went to his heir, and a munificent fortune to his widow, with the use of Courtown Castle and domain, during life. But what caused utter amazement to all who heard it and were acquainted with the parties, was that Lady Courtown and Roderick Magnus O'More, only son of Roderick Magnus O'More, Esq., of Ashgrove, county of Galway, were appointed sole guardians to his two children — Magnus O'More being sole residuary legatee, with a bequest of forty thousand pounds, and a legacy of twenty thousand to Norah, his goddaughter; to servants and dependants he was liberal to a degree, pensioning all who had been in his service during the period of twenty years. In the establishment of Courtown Castle there were domestics not entitled to the handsome pension left them.

The indignation and astonishment felt at Ashgrove on hearing the particulars of Lord Courtown's will may be imagined. Mr. O'More was furious. Mr. Hamilton, whose matrimonial speculation had again failed, and Gorman, who

had returned from London post haste, were ridiculous in their vindictive expressions and outbreaks against the deceased nobleman, for appointing such a disreputable person, as a natural son, guardian to his heir, and residuary legatee, and with so munificent and generous a bequest.

Norah, to shelter herself from listening to reproaches heaped upon Lady Courtown, and even upon herself, accusing her of sacrificing her family for the purpose of self aggrandizement, kept to her own room. She was of age, and, by the will of her grandmother, entitled to the legacy of twenty thousand pounds, which, with interest accumulated during her long minority, amounted to nearly thirty thousand ; but Norah had offered this as a boon to her father, and he had accepted it. She had signed some paper—what she knew not—indeed, she never enquired ; so that it saved her family from any pressure or difficulty ; she cared little if she never received a shilling of it. She received yearly a certain sum, which sufficed

for her wants, and enabled her to assist all deserving of aid on the Ashgrove property and elsewhere.

The twenty thousand pounds left her by Lord Courtown was payable six months after his decease under certain conditions; and one day Gorman O'More said to her, with easy nonchalance. "You cannot require the legacy that old madman left you, I want you to lend it me; you remember you overheard a certain person at Holyhead say that I should shortly be sued for a sum of seven thousand pounds—that is the case now; your lending that twenty thousand pounds will save a further mortgage on the estate of Ashgrove."

"You have only heard, Gorman, that I am left twenty thousand pounds," said Norah quietly; "you do not know how the money is placed."

"What do you mean?" asked her brother, sharply. "You are left twenty thousand pounds, payable six months after that old fool's—"

"Stay, Gorman," said Norah, rising with a

flush upon her cheek, and her eyes sparkling with indignation, "I will not stay to hear a nobleman of unblemished character unjustly and coarsely abused. It is not in my power to dispose of the twenty thousand pounds, except to a husband. I can only enjoy the interest till I am thirty; it will then be at my own disposal. Here is Mr. Gordon's letter on the subject," opening her desk and taking out a letter from Lady Courtown's solicitor.

Gorman O'More, with a smothered execration, read the letter, and, pitching it contemptuously on the table, left the room, saying, "You are deeper, Miss Norah, than people give you credit for." And dashing the door to, he left the room.

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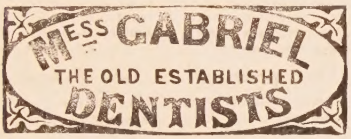

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